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THE HARDIN/SINGER DEBATE ON WORLD HUNGER: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE MORAL OBLIGATIONS OF THE AFFLUENT

BY

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External Examiner

Date December 29, 1981

To the memory of my Father,

a victim of cancer,

September 10, 1976

ABSTRACT

A debate is underway concerning what, if any, are the moral obligations of the affluent in the present situation of widespread world hunger. Garrett Hardin and Peter Singer are opponents in this debate. Hardin has argued that the affluent are obligated not to send aid, primarily because of evidence suggesting that aid given towards the prevention of world hunger will do more harm than good. Singer, disagreeing, has argued that the affluent are obligated to send aid to the hungry primarily because world hunger is an evil which we are able to prevent in part without significant moral sacrifice. Singer claims that Hardin has only shown that we must use greater care in selecting the type of aid we send.

I extend this debate between Hardin and Singer, attempting fairness in presenting, and in elaborating on, both of their positions, and showing that neither position is to be dismissed lightly. Even so, I argue that neither Hardin nor Singer has established a general obligation for the affluent to follow their respective advice. I reason that obligations either allow for genuine moral dilemmas or they do not. This distinction proves useful in showing the limits of the obligations established by Hardin and Singer. I also find useful, for evaluating some of the claims regarding moral value, the notion of five distinct sources of moral value. These items of conceptual apparatus are explained in the Introduction.

In the first section I present Singer's and Hardin's arguments as supporting two of a possible four moral positions which the affluent might hold regarding world hunger. The second section contains a study of a limitation of Singer's criticism of Hardin, and the possible replies Hardin might make to the criticisms of Singer and others. This section

also includes a critique of Hardin in which I argue that his advice is not likely to produce a better result than responsibly planned aid, and thus that he has not established the variety of obligation which does not allow for genuine moral dilemmas. I argue further that any obligations he has established are limited in nature. The third section begins with a closer examination of the principle which forms the basis of Singer's argument for his position. This principle is found faulty in that either it does not retain its breadth of appeal or it is too weak for its use in providing obligations. Particularly problematic for Singer is the question of whether the number of individuals affected by some moral action is significant to moral decision-making. If these numbers are always significant, the obligations Singer supports will be too strong to be plausible, but if the numbers are sometimes not significant then the obligations are weaker than Singer believes. The possibility of the two types of obligation already mentioned is also investigated relative to the obligations Singer argues for. Lastly, prior to the conclusion, I argue that this criticism of Singer has not re-strengthened Hardin's position.

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INTRODUCTION

Poverty is widespread in our age. Yet the twentieth century has been an age of advancements. Many of these advancements have been technical in nature. Even so, we do speak of our civilization as being in general an advanced civilization. The reduction of widespread poverty is apparently one of the areas in which our "advanced civilization" has not made great progress. Particularly disturbing is the presence of widespread hunger which accompanies the poverty of our times. What should our reaction be as we face this situation? The presence of the word "should" in this question suggests that we may have obligations to react to the situation in some particular manner. But if there are no such obligations relevant to the situation of world hunger, then the appropriate response to the question as to "what should our reaction be" is that there is no particular reaction which should be ours. Nevertheless, the question may still be asked: What, if any, are our obligations in the present circumstances of world hunger? More to the point is the question of the obligations, if any, of the affluent in these circumstances.

Such a question involves a number of philosophically interesting topics. One might, for example, consider the various forces which have brought about the situation of a poverty-stricken, advanced planet in the hope of reducing or eliminating these forces. Or one might study the varieties of obligation relevant to the situation: legal--contractual, restitutional, etc.; political (in this situation political obligations would mostly have to do with international politics); moral--the obligations one has in virtue of being a moral being; rational; religious; et cetera. One might also study any one (or any combination) of a number of moral or political theories and its (their) relation to the

present circumstances of poverty; the study of this relation may be theoretical in nature, investigating consistency and general arguments, or the study of the relation may be more practical in orientation, considering the usefulness or propriety of the advice (if any) given by a theory. We are unable to address all the philosophically interesting topics related to the issue of world hunger and the moral obligations of the affluent at this time. Even so, in addressing any one of these topics a discussion will touch on many of the others. This is especially true of the recent debate between Peter Singer and Garrett Hardin. This debate has tended toward more practical concerns with both thinkers offering the affluent advice--opposing advice--as to how they might appropriately respond to world hunger. This debate is particularly intense as both thinkers base their arguments on the framework of the moral theory referred to as consequentialism. The intention of this project is to provide an extension of this debate between Singer and Hardin. Through this extention of their debate I will attempt to show that neither Hardin's nor Singer's arguments are successful--to the extent they respectively seem to think--in establishing the value of following their respective advice. More specifically, I argue for the claim that neither argument will support generally an obligation to follow the advice argued for.

Before I actually provide the case for this claim and the continuation of the controversy between Singer and Hardin, three introductory tasks remain to be performed. I must indicate more precisely the meaning of the claim I am arguing for, its limitations and exceptions. Clarification of the use of certain terms and concepts found within this project will prove helpful. Thirdly, I must provide some indication of and justification for the procedure and order followed throughout this project.

First, then, what do I mean by the claim that neither Singer's nor Hardin's arguments will support generally an obligation to follow the advice argued for? Since the limitations of this claim vary according to whose arguments the claim is being applied to, we might con-

sider the meaning of the claim as applied to Singer's position separately from its meaning relative to Hardin's. Singer argues that the affluent are obligated to help prevent and reduce world hunger. (Such an obligation, of course, requires us to help prevent and reduce world hunger.) The obligation referred to here is a moral obligation. Singer maintains a utilitarian view of morality, but he believes that his arguments for the affluent's moral obligation to assist the poor will establish this obligation on any plausible ethical view.[1] Utilitarianism is a variety of consequentialism, which, I have mentioned, is at the basis of both Hardin's and Singer's reasoning. A moral view is consequentialist if it determines the moral value of actions by the value of the consequences. The non-consequentialist view maintains that some actions have a fixed moral value regardless of the value of their consequences. Reference to the value of consequence does not generally mean moral value, although on some consequentialist views this may be included. Utilitarianism is distinct among consequentialist theories in that according to utilitarian theory consequences are valued in relation to some goal often expressed by some formula like: the maximization of benefit over harm, on balance, for all affected. Actions thus may have more or less utility towards the achievement of such goals. Singer's own version of utilitarianism requires one to weigh up all the interests of those affected by the possible action and to choose the action most likely to maximize these interests.[2] I intend to argue that Singer does not establish the obligation to assist the hungry for all who hold plausible ethical views, but rather some of the essential elements of his utilitarianism are needed to establish the obligation. Such a result is considerably less than Singer believes himself to have founded.

Furthermore, I shall argue, by way of distinguishing two concepts of moral obligation, that either these "essential elements of utilitarianism" will have implausible results concerning the world hunger situation, or the obligation established is much weaker than Singer might have us think. I distinguish that conception of moral obligation which is deontically strict and does not allow for obligations to do mutually

exclusive actions--hereafter referred to as obligation A--from the conception of obligation which does allow for obligations to perform mutually exclusive actions--hereafter referred to as obligation B. A conception of moral obligation is deontically strict if it insists that one cannot be both obligated to perform an action and obligated to not perform the same action. This implies more generally that there exist no pairs of obligation A such that the actions they require are jointly impossible. No two acts which are jointly impossible are both obligatory. This principle, which is the basis of obligation A, is distinct from the principle that "ought" implies "can". The principle that "ought" implies "can" claims that no impossible acts are obligatory.

The characterization of the concept of obligation in terms of normal systems of modal logic is such that these two principles are equivalent. Thus a standard deontic logic will maintain both principles as axioms (hence my reference to obligations A as deontically strict). I apologize to those not familiar with modal and deontic logics for not being able to further explicate these logics at this time, but I will suggest that the book Modal Logic: An Introduction by Brian Chellas might be useful in this regard.[3] It is significant to note that Chellas believes that the development of what he calls a "minimal deontic logic" is possible such that the principle that "ought" implies "can" will obtain and will not imply the principle that no two jointly impossible acts are both obligatory. Thus a "minimal deontic logic" need not have the principle that no two jointly impossible acts are both obligatory. The possibility of a "minimal deontic logic" is significant because it would provide a basis for what I call obligations B such that acceptance of obligations B will not involve the rejection of the "ought" implies "can" principle which many are loathe to reject. Because space does not admit of a full explanation of these logics at this point I shall not assume the correctness of their application to the concept of obligations in what follows. I simply want to point out to the reader that a logical basis for obligations B, together with the principle that "ought" implies "can", may exist.

Obligations B are, of course, those obligations such that one might be obligated to perform both of two mutually exclusive actions. Obligations B are to be distinguished from prima facie obligations. Prima facie obligations are apparent obligations which may not be really obligatory when all relevant factors have been considered. Thus, in cases of conflicting prima facie obligations someone might maintain, contrary to our obligations B account, that the only obligations to perform both of two jointly impossible actions are prima facie obligations, i.e. they are not "obligations all things considered". One would not be considered morally blameworthy for not fulfilling a prima facie obligation if it conflicted with some other prima facie obligation that when all things were considered remained obligatory. On the other hand no such procedure as the consideration of all relevant factors will necessarily absolve one from the moral blameworthiness resulting from not fulfilling some obligation B in conflict with another obligation B. (The concept of blameworthiness will be somewhat clarified shortly.)

It is a fundamental assumption in this thesis that obligations B exist. Those who accept a "minimal deontic logic" might not quarrel with me over such a claim, but the claim is contentious nevertheless. Some object to obligations B because they believe that such an account involves the rejection of the principle that "ought" implies "can". Even so, this principle might be questioned. For example, I ought to keep my promises, and yet I cannot, when I promise to do mutually exclusive acts. Of course those supportive of the "ought" implies "can" principle might refine it so that it does not apply to self imposed "oughts". Even so, I remain confident along with E.J. Lemmon and T. Nagel that morality and the sources of moral value are not so simple and clearcut that all conflicts will be resolvable.[4] This is to say that there will be genuine instances of moral dilemma. A moral dilemma is a situation where conflicting obligations B are equally compelling so that a person confronted with the situation will not be able to determine the morally correct course of action in the situation on the basis of his knowledge of the applicable obligations. Some moral dilemmas will

be of the variety which a person can create for himself; recall my example of promising to perform mutually exclusive acts. Other moral dilemmas will be a result of the characteristics of the way the world is. I am not able at this point to review the arguments and reasons which favour the view that genuine moral dilemmas (even those not created by an agent for himself) and obligations B do exist. Arguments have been given in favour of this claim by Lemmon and Nagel in the articles cited above. I shall provide two examples of what I mean by moral dilemmas.

The first example of a moral dilemma is the situation where there is some evidence that a person ought to do one thing and some evidence that the same person ought not to do this same thing, but the evidence is not conclusive for either "ought", and furthermore more conclusive evidence will not be available (so that the situation is not one of prima facie obligations). In such a situation performing one of the mutually exclusive acts will not convince one that the evidence supporting the moral obligation to perform the other act was not just as strong as for the moral obligation fulfilled. Within the framework of a consequentialist ethic such a situation might arise when the probability of two equally desirable results, each resulting respectively from two jointly impossible acts, is the same. One might also wonder whether minute differences in the probability of mutually exclusive, equally desirable outcomes, would morally obligate one to perform the act leading to the more probable outcome. The second example of what I mean by moral dilemma is the case where conflicting sources of moral value apply to one agent in a particular situation. This might happen when two acceptable moral outlooks or frameworks clash, or when a situation arises which the agent's particular moral outlook is unable to deal with. Following Nagel let me mention five sources of moral value, which I believe correspond to several moral outlooks in that a moral outlook will often give precedence to one source of moral value over other sources. There is value in fulfilling specific obligations which, unlike the obligations I refer to throughout this work, have to be incurred either by some form of contractual commitment or by some special relation to others

(including institutions). There is value in meeting the constraints on our actions due to the general rights which all possess. These rights provide liberties to carry out certain acts and to not be treated in certain ways. A third source of value is called utility which as we have noted is concerned with the achievement of greatest benefits over harms for all affected. A fourth source of value is the importance of certain perfectionist goals such as the value of great civilizations, of scientific discovery, or of artistic creation. The greatness of a civilization is largely made up of the number of perfectionist goals which have been achieved (i.e. achievable) within it. Even those who do not take part in such achievements, nor enjoy specific benefits from them, generally value that sort of civilization which makes such achievements possible. This is different from a fifth value which is the value of being able to be committed to one's <u>own</u> projects and undertakings, of being able to work towards the completion of personal enterprises. Most people desire to be able to finish the projects they begin and there seems to be some moral value in doing so. When these sources of value place different obligations on a person in such a way that one is unable to weigh the different values on the same "scales", and then when these obligations require both of mutually exclusive actions, the obligations are obligations B, and the situation, a moral dilemma.

Again, many thinkers do not accept obligations B as existing obligations. Indeed obligations B are less like our intuitive conception of obligation (than obligations A), in that they often might not determine the moral value of performing any one of a number of mutually exclusive actions to be greater than doing any of the others. This is to say that being shown that a given person has an obligation B in a given situation does not imply that the person must fulfill this obligation to be morally praiseworthy. In such situations one may say either that every action is morally praiseworthy, or that every action is morally blameworthy. This is to say that moral obligations B do not determine how one ought to act in such situations. Such obligations are less informative than Singer wants. On the other hand, I hope to show that

obligation A, which is the type of obligation Singer most likely believes himself to be establishing, is too strong, leading to what most will regard as implausible restrictions on our habits of charity. So when I claim that Singer's arguments do not support an obligation to follow the advice argued for, I mean that the obligation is somewhat dependent on the correctness of utilitarianism; and even given utilitarianism, the obligation will be either implausible to many, or weaker than suggested by Singer.

Before considering what I mean by claiming that Hardin's arguments will not support the obligation to follow his advice, some clarification of the terminology to be used concerning obligation will be helpful. These clarifications will apply to both obligations A and obligations B. My primary concern throughout this project is with moral obligations. Both Singer and Hardin are also mainly concerned about moral obligations --although this claim might be disputed in Hardin's case. One might distinguish a concern about moral obligations from a concern about the obligations of reason. The one concern asks what is the moral thing to do in a given situation, the other asks what is the reasonable thing to do. This distinction is not to imply that the requirements of morality will conflict with the requirements of rationality. The necessity of such a conflict reflects the interest of a separate question, and one which for my use of this distinction, I need not answer. I use this distinction for those cases where the requirements of only one of reason or morality are indecisive in guiding our actions. In particular, where there are conflicting obligations B (or a moral dilemma), then the obligations of reason may give us guidance as to the correct or best course of action. That is to say that there are resources in reason to guide us in moral dilemmas. This is not to be confused with the stronger claim, which I do not address, that considerations of reason will necessarily provide guidance in moral dilemmas. My claim is only that reason provides a separate source of value, and thus a separate source of guidance, for our actions. Since by "rational obligations" I mean to include not only the obligations of logic, but also those of practi-

cal reason, I recognize that the distinction between obligations of reason and obligations of morality will be controversial.

Even so, perhaps the following example will provide some justification for the distinction. Suppose that I am a hermit who lives alone having no friends or relatives. Suppose further that, having learnt to perform all my tasks using only my right hand, I find my left hand often gets in my way, and so am contemplating cutting it off. I consider the possible sources of moral value to determine whether I am morally required to keep the hand. But since I have no obligations due to special relationships, and since there is no general right which all possess such that they are entitled to my having or keeping a left hand, and since the hand gets in the way of my activity quite often, the benefits of its removal will balance the pain of its removal, and since the removal of my hand will certainly not jeopardize any perfectionist goals nor any of my own projects there seems to be no moral requirement that I not cut off my left hand. Nevertheless, practical reason would demand greater justification for the removal of a hand than the facts that it is inconvenient and there is no moral obligation to keep it. Practical reason obligates me to keep my left hand, provided there are no stronger considerations in favour of its removal (e.g. gangrene). Even if the hand were paralyzed I would not be generally regarded as reasonable in throwing it away. The example I have chosen here might be considered by some to be an example of prudence. I would consider prudence to be a part of practical reason, but not the whole. The reasonable thing to do need not be in any particular person's or any particular group's best interest, for sometimes practical reason will choose between the person and the group. Sometimes the only available evidence will not indicate which course of action is the more prudent. There may be some who disagree with me concerning the unreasonableness of cutting off hands in the situation described and there may be others who believe that some other fundamental source of moral value exists which applies necessarily to my examples. In other words, changing the example slightly will not avoid the obligation created by such a moral value. Some of those ob-

jecting to my example in these ways simply disagree with me as to the proper use of the words 'practical reason'. Others might disagree with me more fundamentally by claiming practical reason to be itself a sixth fundamental source of moral value. Such a person may wish to read my claims concerning moral value and moral obligation as claims about five fundamental sources of value and their requirements, as opposed to a sixth fundamental source of value and its requirements. This should not significantly alter the claims I intend to make.

Notice further about my example that I do not claim for practical reason a specific decision making process. There are such processes in some areas of reason, for example: logic, but I believe the use of reason may exceed the boundaries of specific decision making processes. Having exceeded such boundaries we may recognize the reasonable and distinguish it from the unreasonable by the insights of that sort of person we would be willing to call a sage. These insights are the ability to determine, in situations of difficult decisions, a correct, proper or, at least, best choice. The advice of such insights may be different than the advice of "all things considered" because the advice of "all things considered" will imply that no genuine dilemma existed in the first place, whereas the insights of the wise man will recognize a dilemma for what it is and offer advice appropriate to the conflict. The distinction between the obligations of reason and the obligation of morality will be clarified somewhat more below.

Neither Singer nor Hardin uses the distinction between obligations of reason and obligations of morality, whereas I do. On the other hand, they do not argue against such a distinction. Singer considers reason to have an important role in ethics, but the distinction between obligations of reason and obligations of morality should not prevent reason from playing such a role. This possibility remains because most of us are not able to fragment ourselves into strictly moral parts or strictly reasoning parts for the purpose of performing some action solely as moral agent or solely <u>qua</u> rational being. Even so, there are some who lack the full powers (and even most of the powers) of a rational being, and of whom we may to some extent speak of as moral agents. Again, my

interest is primarily in what morality requires of the affluent in the situation of world hunger. I suspect that what morality requires will not decide how the affluent should act in this situation and that reason may be the primary source of guidance towards the problem of world hunger. This present project, being limited, might be considered to be a small step towards this larger goal. How is it that the requirements of morality might not decide the issue?

An action would be morally required (or a moral obligation) if not performing the action should be considered morally blameworthy. A given action may have one of three moral values: blameworthiness, neutrality, praiseworthiness. Two of these values admit of degrees: praiseworthiness and blameworthiness. If praiseworthiness alone made actions obligatory we might all be required to be moral heroes. When all possible actions in a given situation are equally praiseworthy or equally blameworthy then the situation is morally neutral in the minimal sense that morality does not guide the agent as to which course of action is to be most valued. Since we are morally obligated not to perform morally blameworthy acts, those holding exclusively to an obligation A account must say that there are no obligations (A) in situations where every course of action (including non-action) is equally blameworthy. This sense of moral neutrality is somewhat broader--in that the agent is considered to be morally neutral--than the sense which arises if we allow obligations B. Obligations B would allow that an agent, in a situation where every course of action is equally blameworthy, does what he is obligated not to do, and thus the agent may be held blameworthy even in situations which in the <u>minimal</u> sense are morally neutral. In situations which are morally neutral in this minimal sense, reason may offer some guidance. A given action may have one of three rational values: blameworthiness, neutrality, praiseworthiness. These values interact in the same manner for reason as they did for morality, and obligations of reason are also similarly formed. (Other varieties of obligation <u>may</u> also result via similar processes.) My point is not that one should try to live according to rational value rather than moral values nor that

one should try to live by moral values rather than rational--I do not wish to so compartmentalize our lives. I hope rather that distinguishing between rational and moral obligation will help us to find other sources of guidance in situations of moral dilemma. Even so, this project does not explicitly aim at finding all such "other sources", nor at formulating their guidance.

Notice that on the account of obligation which I have presented, conflicts may arise between varieties of obligation. For example, I might have a moral obligation not to perform some act and an obligation from reason to perform it. In cases of such conflicts between obligations, deciding which obligation should override the other will be rather difficult. I do not provide any procedure or mechanism to guide decisions of this sort. I suspect that the wise man would proceed case by case when deciding concerning these conflicts. We will face this variety of conflict in the critique of Hardin's position when we consider the value of experimentation. Notice also that for some, moral values might always take precedence over other values; such a morality could be called a "pure morality" and perhaps this is what Hardin has in mind when he speaks derogatively of the requirements of pure morality. Nevertheless, to speak derogatively of pure morality is not necessary in this case if my claim is correct that considerations of moral obligation do not decide the issue in cases of moral dilemma. Giving precedence to moral considerations yields no particular advice when moral considerations do not decide the issue, so one might hold to a "pure morality" in this sense and yet not be thereby forced not to act from practical considerations. On the other hand, if Hardin is referring to certain varieties of non-consequentialist moralities by "pure morality", then those holding to pure morality might well believe that moral values decide the issue, even if practical considerations conflict; Hardin's disagreement with such "pure morality" runs deep.[5] Having clarified how I intend to use the concept of obligation we must return to consider what it is that I claim Hardin has not founded.

Hardin does not establish generally an obligation to follow the

advice he argues for. Now since my primary interest is in moral obligations, I am maintaining that Hardin does not demonstrate a moral obligation not to aid the poor. Someone might object that it is not clear that this was Hardin's intention, given his derogative remarks concerning "pure morality". I might reply that his concern that the affluent not cause greater amounts of suffering and death in the future is a concern to not have their actions towards future generations be considered morally blameworthy. Nevertheless, Hardin's concern for the future is not so clear as to its moral content; he may simply desire a better environment for his offspring in a consistently egoistic non-moral manner. Even so, even if my claim that he provides for no moral obligations would not be regarded as significant by his supporters, my argument for this claim is of significance: Hardin fails to show moral obligation in virtue of failing to show any obligation to follow his advice. In any case, he does not establish any obligations A nor any overriding obligations to follow his advice.

Now in view of the fact that Hardin may not be interested in the moral questions concerning world hunger and also considering that many might regard the moral questions concerning world hunger to be dependent on certain factual questions (such as: Would continued efforts to relieve world hunger in fact threaten human survival? Can proper aid in fact reduce population growth to the point where food production is able to keep pace, comfortably providing for all?) one might question the significance of a study which seeks to concentrate on moral obligations in this area. Neither supporters of Hardin, nor those who believe that the moral questions reduce to factual questions in this case, will be surprised at the claim that morality does not decide this issue. How might I justify proceeding by way of emphasis on the moral question?

I might answer the first part of this objection to the significance of a study with such a procedural basis by pointing out that Hardin's involvement in the debate with Singer, involves him in the moral questions since Singer's primary concern is with morality. Secondly, Hardin is not clear in his avoidance of the moral questions; he has been

interpreted as taking a position as to our moral obligations.[6] These remarks, however, do not address the larger question as to why extend the debate at all, especially if the moral questions reduce to factual questions.

In addressing this larger question we might consider what most have in mind by suggesting that the moral questions reduce to factual questions in this issue of world hunger. I believe the two possible meanings already hinted at are most popular. One view is that the moral question reduces to the factual question as to whether an action will jeopardize the survival of our race. But the moral question is reduced to this factual question only if we are clearly morally obligated to act one way given the jeopardy of our survival, and another way given that our survival is not in jeopardy. Most people might intuitively think this to be the case; we are obligated to not jeopardize our survival and this obligation takes precedence over the moral obligation to aid the hungry. The obligation to not threaten our survival may even be a moral obligation. I find two difficulties with this view. The first difficulty is that the precedence of the value of survival over other moral values has not been established. It is possible that someone might not wish upon his descendents survival in a very immoral world. Someone might choose having no descendents to be more valuable than having descendents in a world of great suffering and moral evil. This is not to say that the descendents would be in any sense better off if they were not to exist (which is a matter full of conceptual problems) but that that the progenitor would evaluate himself as better off--perhaps in the sense of "less morally blameworthy"--for not bringing offspring into such a world. My position is that, rather than the value of survival clearly outweighing the other moral values, or the other moral values clearly outweighing the value of survival when survival is threatened, such situations are similar to those of moral dilemma. The moral questions then remain important in attempting to discover whether the situation is a moral dilemma, or if not, which values take precedence. Furthermore, I do not believe the strength of our obligation to aid the hungry

even when survival is not threatened to be established. Thus this answer to the factual question will not solve the moral question. The second difficulty is that reducing the moral question to a factual question will not solve our need for guidance if the factual question cannot be resolved at the present time. Part of the import of my critique of Hardin is to show that some of these factual questions are really questions of probability. Another possible view of the reduction of the moral problem to a factual matter is also popular.

This other view of the reduction is that the moral problem is founded on old population forecasts and that if these forecasts are in fact wrong no moral questions arise. Many do not believe that population will continue to be a problem among the poor. They point to the change in the population patterns of the industrial states. Population in the industrial states grew quickly during the period of their first exposure to greater prosperity and medical advances, but growth rates have now declined significantly in these societies.[7] Even so, certainly many disanalogies exist between the former history of the industrial societies and the present situation involving societies experiencing large-scale hunger. Certainly, on this view too, the factual question is really one of probabilities. And once again, I hope to show that even if our survival is not threatened, i.e. the growth rates will decline sufficiently, the strength of the obligation to aid the hungry has not been established (at least not by Singer). Moral questions remain. Now that other factual questions might determine the moral questions remains possible. The strength of the effect of some particular factual considerations on the moral question might depend on the views of one speaking to the moral question. For example I hope to show that there is a factual question which will cause Hardin's position serious problems. (I attempt this in the last part of this work.) So rather than factual questions immediately deciding the debate, they have a place within the debate, and furthermore, much of the debate may proceed without answering some factual questions (e.g. can the world presently support its population) because the answers to these factual questions may change in the future. Our debate

could then be significant in preparing us for such a future. Thus I intend to proceed by extending the debate between Hardin and Singer with a moral emphasis.

In extending any debate one must begin by reviewing the positions in the debate as they have become established. I do this in the first section, "The Positions". In this section I introduce a broader range of possible positions, as well as reviewing Hardin's position and then Singer's. In the next section, "Hardin Fails to Justify His Advice", I actually begin to extend the debate. In this section I begin by analyzing Singer's relation to triage. Beginning with Singer's position allows the discovery of how a triage position might be morally obligatory even on Singer's account. This discussion concerning Singer's relation to triage also provides us with some of the conceptual tools for extending the debate between Hardin and Singer. In this section the debate is extended primarily by way of a defense of Hardin's position followed by a critique of Hardin's position. The discussion of Singer and triage is needed primarily to aid the defense of Hardin's position (or an interpretation of it). The defense of Hardin's position is necessary primarily because Hardin is not in completely good repute as a thinker. I could do the pro-aid supporters little good by defeating a straw man position (for in that case we might actually remain obligated to not aid). But how strong is the pro-aid position?

In the third section, "Singer Fails to Show Moral Obligation", I argue that the pro-aid position is not as strong as Singer seems to think. I begin by considering in greater detail the basic principle Singer uses to argue for moral obligations in these situations. I then consider the relation of Singer's position to the problem as to whether the number of individuals involved should be given moral weight. The discussion of this relation shows that Singer has not established the case for aid so strongly as he thinks. Finally, I include in this section some comments on Hardin's relation to the question of whether the numbers of people should count in reckoning one's obligations, showing that Hardin's position also faces difficulties here, and thus that moral obligations do

not guide the affluent as to how they ought to respond to world hunger. In the conclusion I review the arguments and make suggestions as to what might be a rational course of action for the affluent in their response to world hunger.

Finally, allow me to apologize for this admittedly abstract treatment of a so warm and compassionate human activity as aiding the hungry. Perhaps part of the problem is that the activity of aid has not been carried out in a warm compassionate manner. Cold, calculating, debates over the obligations to aid may serve to divert attentions from actually doing something concrete for the hungry. Nevertheless, I hope that by understanding more clearly the moral position of the affluent towards the needy we might avoid those guilt feelings which are non-productive and practice the generosity of wise men.

FOOTNOTES FOR INTRODUCTION

1. Peter Singer, Practical Ethics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp.168-171.

2. Peter Singer, Practical Ethics, p.12.

3. B. Chellas, Modal Logic: An Introduction (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). See chapters 4 and 6, especially pp.201-202.

4. E.J. Lemmon, "Moral Dilemmas", in Philosophical Review, vol.LXXI (1962), pp.139-158. T. Nagel, "The Fragmentation of Value", in Mortal Questions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp.128-141. My use of the word 'obligation' corresponds to Lemmon's use of the word 'ought' rather than his use of the word 'obligation'.

5. Notice that I do not argue against this latter possible conception of pure morality, that morality does not decide the issue. I will only comment that in cases of moral dilemma the methods of deciding the values of conflicting acts seems rather arbitrary or if not arbitrary then they allow that the values of the conflicting acts might be equal and hence do not decide the issue.

6. W. Aiken and H. La Follette, "Introduction", World Hunger and Moral Obligation, eds. W. Aiken and H. La Follette (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977), p.2.

7. See Robert S. McNamara, "Population and International Security", in The Theory and Practice of International Relations, ed. F.A. Sondermann, et al., 5th ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1979), pp.249-262, especially p.253.

SECTION ONE
THE POSITIONS

The giving of aid has a tendency to produce rather touchy situations. This has been so in incidents ranging from "helping" a friend with a personal problem to "solutions" to the world hunger problem. Especially dangerous in these cases of aid or attempted aid is the possibility of doing more harm than good. Recently this danger in regard to world hunger has been brought forcefully to our attention by Garrett Hardin. What does morality or justice require of the well-off towards a solution to the problem of world hunger? The answers to this question may be roughly grouped into three basic positions. The following three positions have been suggested:[1] (1) the requirement is such that the affluent are obligated to feed the starving and it would be blameworthy not to; (2) the requirement may be so weak that while feeding the hungry is praiseworthy, not feeding them is not blameworthy (i.e. not feeding the hungry is either a neutral or a praiseworthy moral act); (3) the requirement may actually make it blameworthy to send aid and we are obligated not to. Symmetry might suggest that we add a fourth possible position even though it is very unpopular: (4) not feeding the hungry may be praiseworthy while feeding them is not blameworthy. One interpretation of Hardin argues that the moral position of the well-off in relation to a number of poor nations (generally the worst of the poor) is specified by the third possibility, (3) above. Of the disagreement found between the four positions, the disagreement between this third possibility and the first is the strongest, providing for lively controversy. The answers of most people to the moral question of world hunger fall within the first two positions, or the pro-aid groups. Those interested in holding to and maintaining a justified answer to any philosophical question do

well to take into consideration and deal with the strongest opposition to their own position. The strongest opposition to (1) and (2) above is found in (3) above. Thus a thorough understanding and discussion of this third position should be of interest to those supportive of aid, and especially those who wish to defend or justify their position towards world hunger. We will discuss the third position via Hardin.

A. Garrett Hardin

Hardin is the author of a number of books and numerous articles. The works which are most directly related to our present topic are two articles, "Living on a lifeboat" and "Lifeboat Ethics: The Case Against Helping the Poor".[2] These articles are very similar, making mostly the same points and arguments. I have chosen to model my statement of Hardin's position of the former. This preliminary account of his position will be augmented by reference to his more recent works (especially The Limits of Altruism and Promethean Ethics) when we consider the criticisms of his opinion and the possible replies to such criticisms available to him in the next section.

Hardin begins his discussion with some comments on the use of metaphors in problem solving and suggests that pitting metaphors against each other may lead us closest to metaphor-free solutions to the problems. He discusses some problems with the metaphor of the earth as a spaceship. A primary problem is the lack of a captain in the face of separate groups claiming rights without responsibilities. The metaphor might be acceptable if we admitted to spaceship responsibilities. Where human survival is concerned responsibilities must always accompany rights or precede rights.

Hardin suggests the lifeboat as an alternative metaphor. Each rich nation might be thought of as a lifeboat. The poor of the world are in lifeboats as well, according to this picture, but the boats of the poor are overcrowded. The poor are always falling out of their boats and appealing to those in the rich boats for help. The central ethical

question is what should passengers on the rich lifeboats do? Note that Hardin seems to address this question as a moral question.

First we must admit that the boats' capacities are limited. Every nation has a limited "carrying capacity". Some even believe that the lifeboats of the rich may be already exceeding this capacity (although given the luxury of the boats of the rich this does not seem likely). In any case, we ought to allow for a safety factor--say a typical rich lifeboat has fifty people in it and could hold ten more at the cost of losing the safety margin. Outside of such a boat are about one hundred people asking to be let in (one third of the world is relatively well-off and two thirds are poor). Hardin sees three possible responses by the rich. We could try to fit everyone into the boat (perhaps in trying to follow some Christian or Marxian ideal). Of course, all would sink--"[c]omplete justice, complete catastrophe". Or we could use up the safety factor and let ten more in. Eventually the loss of the safety factor will cost us, and furthermore we face the problem of deciding which ten to admit. The third possibility is to allow no more in. Survival is then possible, although the rich may have to guard against boarding parties. Hardin admits that this is an unjust solution. To those within the boat who feel guilty, Hardin suggests that the only practical action they be allowed to take (by those interested in minimizing the tragic consequences) is the giving up their own spot to another needy person. The net result of people taking such action would be the elimination of such (action-oriented) guilt-feelings. This is the basic lifeboat metaphor.

Hardin complicates this basic picture with factors from the real world. Reproduction is doubling populations in the poor countries at a rate of more than twice that of the better-off countries. There is a population equal in size to the United States' which is doubling more than four times as fast. Nations regard their reproduction rates as sovereign rights. If each American shared with one in this equal sized population that is doubling over four times as fast, in eighty-seven years when the United States population has doubled, each American would

have to share with more than eight people. Sharing under such conditions leads to the tragedy of the commons.[3]

The tragedy of the commons is a concept developed by Hardin. He has named the concept after the historical example of this system of distributing and managing the goods of the environment. The historical example is the village commons. In this system the group has the management (or utilization) rights to the resource, the village pasture, but the individual has the right to the proceeds or harvest, his cattle, which are fattened in the village pasture. The group allows common access to the resource while the individuals harvest it for themselves. Hardin claims that this system will operate successfully only so long as the group's use of the resource is below the "carrying capacity" of the resource. The "carrying capacity" of a resource being the amount of use it will bear without significant deterioration. When the use of a resource is at or exceeding its carrying capacity the benefits of overloading accrue to the individual while the loss, the deterioration of the resource, is shared by the whole community (including future members). The one who acts responsibly suffers more (his cows are thin) than those who do not (their cows are thin but greater in number). "[I]t takes only one...to ruin a system of voluntary restraint." In our present discussion, the commons which concerns Hardin is the world food banks. Hardin reveals in whose interest it is that we give food: farmers, manufacturers of products needed on farms, grain elevators, railroads and shipping lines. All these are paid by the common tax dollar. More importantly, food becomes the common resource to which all rulers have access. The food bank removes motivation for rulers to budget for emergencies; if each organization is solely responsible for its own well-being then responsible budgeting may be learnt from experience: suffering during emergencies. Hardin points out that the word "bank" in this situation is metaphorical. In the absence of such "banks" the emergencies periodically reduce populations that are not controlled by a sovereign to the carrying capacity or lower. The carrying capacity is thus maintained in the long term equilibrium. The cycle involves suffering but

is normal and is avoidable by population control by the sovereign. The input of food from the world bank or any external source prevents populations from falling and population sizes are pushed upward. The emergencies become worse and eventually catastrophe of great magnitude will occur. The tragedy of the food bank commons is that these banks provide greater motivation to withdraw than to add to the common store. World food banks allow sovereigns their rights over population growth without the corresponding responsibility which ought to accompany such rights. Some dismiss these dangers due to belief in the "benign demographic transition": development leads to decreased population growth. No indubitable large-scale instance of this effect has been produced in the "poor" countries over the period of modern international aid. Furthermore, we do not have the unlimited resources to continue waiting for such a transition indefinitely.

Hardin also considers the effects of the "Green Revolution". He suggests that the "Green Revolution's" ability to produce more food is irrelevant since the population problem is like cancer: it demands food but is not cured by getting it. More significantly, huge populations require more than just food. The more energies and resources we apply towards food production the more we draw on other aspects of our environment: safe areas of shelter, clean air, clean water and the balance with wild animals. We may be able to feed more but the cost in lower quality of life will be heavy especially for future generations: will future generations in these countries which exceed their carrying capacities thank us? This question suggests that moral blameworthiness may be involved. Our aid attempts are especially to be condemned for their lack of post-audits checking their actual results. Hardin goes on to argue that immigration also creates a commons as surely as sending the aid does when the poor are allowed to seek refuge in wealthy countries. At this point Hardin answers an objection and his answer reveals a little more of his position towards justice. Americans of non-Indian background are all immigrants or descendants of immigrants. Our ownership of property here is not completely just--so how can <u>we</u> justify stopping immigration. Pure justice would suggest that we ought to give the land and

its profits back to its rightful owners: the North American Indians. But this suggestion does not seem practical: There would be no place for non-Indian North Americans to go. Furthermore, Europeans have no better title to their land, although it is not clear to whom they should give up their holdings. Such "pure justice" would seem to produce either an infinite regress (Hardin must mean "incalculable regress"), or, if the regress were terminated and "pure justice" implemented at any arbitrary point, disorder and suffering. In order to prevent this result positive law provides limitations to justify the rejection of pure justice. We cannot remake the past; we must begin from the present unequal distributions of resources. Many of those originally wronged are dead anyway (so we cannot really give anything back to them) and dividing resources equitably now (with the differences in reproduction rates) would jeopardize the survival of all. (We will consider the probability of such jeopardy later.) Hardin suggests that the United States government should implement complete population control ranging over both reproduction and immigration with a certain degree of democratic input. On his view, this control would involve achieving the stable condition of zero population growth, which in turn requires that a specific number of births be allowed per year together with an acceptable system of allocating birthrights to potential parents. Then, if the situation arises where--perhaps due to some inhumane regime--a group of refugees are created such that there is a general desire to admit them into the country, then two conditions would have to be fulfilled. First, the number of birthrights allotted the following year would have to be diminished by exactly the number of immigrants allowed in. Second, a democratic mechanism should decide between the number of immigrants and the number of birthrights to be allotted. Hardin suggests that the franchise of this democratic mechanism should be weighted to give potential parents greater control, since they pay the greater costs for the country's accepting immigrants. Such is Hardin's basic position towards lifeboat ethics and world hunger.

B. Peter Singer

We shall find useful for comparison the consideration of a major attempt to justify the continued giving of aid in the face of Hardin's arguments. I shall briefly outline an essay by Peter Singer, "Rich and Poor" for this purpose.[4] Afterwards we shall be in a position to address the question: to what extent is Singer able to undermine Hardin's arguments (if at all)?

Singer begins by noting that not all poverty is relative: absolute poverty is an understandable condition and is probably the principle cause of human misery today. Absolute poverty is "poverty by any standard", "life at the very margin of existence" and a condition "beneath any reasonable definition of human decency". Absolute poverty is the condition of having insufficient resources (income) available to provide for adequate physical nutrition. The reason behind the existence of absolute poverty is not a problem of production but primarily of distribution. Furthermore Singer points out that absolute affluence is also definable; it is having more income than is needed to provide adequately all the basic necessities of life. Absolute affluence exists. People who are within the group of the absolute affluent could transfer wealth to the poor without threatening their own basic welfare. (Hardin would ask: What about their posterity's basic welfare?) Singer argues that the distinction between killing and allowing to die is of no intrinsic ethical significance. Thus those of us who could do more to help solve the world hunger than we are, are really like murderers. Singer lists several significant differences between the situations of spending money on selfish interests and of deliberately shooting people. But these differences turn out to be extrinsic rather than intrinsic--that is, these differences are not <u>necessarily</u> linked with the distinction between allowing to die and killing--although they do explain why we <u>normally</u> consider killing to be worse than allowing to die. Is the case of world hunger one of those <u>normal</u> cases? Does any of the differences justify our inactivity towards world hunger? Singer argues concerning each difference that it does not justify our inactivity, although some

of the differences do show that not aiding is not to be condemned on par with murdering people. "Not aiding" is probably more on the level of "killing due to reckless driving" and is thus still morally reprehensible.

Singer goes on to make a comparison between not saving a drowning child in a shallow pond (at the cost of muddy clothing) and our inactivity towards world starvation. He believes that he has found a principle which most should accept which is applicable to both these situations (the drowning child and world starvation). The principle is that "[i]f we can prevent something bad without sacrificing anything of comparable [moral] significance, we ought to do it". This principle forms the first premise of Singer's basic argument. He goes on to reason that (second premise) absolute poverty is bad, and that (third premise) some absolute poverty can be prevented without the sacrifice of something of comparable moral significance. Thus, we are obligated to prevent some absolute poverty. Not to do so is wrong--placing Singer in the first group of possible positions towards world hunger, (1) above. Singer suggests that the third premise--that some absolute poverty can be prevented without the sacrifice of anything of comparable moral significance--is the most controversial and may vary in accordance with one's views on moral significance. Singer considers several objections to this argument for an obligation on the part of the well-off towards world hunger or absolute poverty. I shall review only Singer's handling of one such objection: The objection raised by Garrett Hardin.

We have already reviewed Hardin's position, but Singer takes note of an additional concept associated with that position: the policy of "triage".[5] Triage policy would group countries into three groups: (a) countries which will soon be able to feed their populations even without our aid, (b) countries which will not be able to limit their populations and thus will not be able to feed their poor even with our help and (c) countries where our help will make a difference in their becoming self-reliant. Triage policy goes on to advise that in situations of scarcity or threatening scarcity we aid <u>only</u> those countries found in group (c) where our help will actually promote the achievement

of self-reliance.[6]

Singer notes that some have argued against Hardin's view by suggesting that Hardin has his facts wrong: the problem of overpopulation is a myth; the earth could support up to ten times its present population. Singer agrees that we are able to produce enough to feed our entire present population but he has serious questions about our ability to keep up production growth at the rates of population growth. Population growth must be checked in one of two ways: a decline in birth rate or a rise in death rates. Triage supporters argue that we will have to make use of a rise in death rates in order to keep population down and so a place exists for famine, increased infant mortality rates and epidemics of diseases. Without these admittedly awful occurrences the consequences will be even worse as population will multiply the ultimate disaster.

Singer reasons that we must oppose such consequentialist ethics on its own grounds. He begins by noting that any consequentialist ethic must take probability of outcomes into consideration. The evil of the process of famine and disease if allowed at the present time is certain --many will suffer and die. But the greater evil of a "population crash" in the future is not near so certain. The "demographic transition" might possibly occur. Some of the incentives to have many children are being removed--more children are surviving, there is greater economic security for the elderly, and education is increasing. We can concentrate our aid so that it would hasten the "demographic transition", offering education and various forms of birth control.[7] Our answer to Hardin should be that his reasoning teaches us what <u>type</u> of aid to give (i.e. aid that will increase the likelihood of the demographic transition) rather than that we ought to stop giving aid.

Even so, Singer realizes that there may be some countries which refuse to slow their population growth. In such circumstances Singer agrees with Hardin that aid given will ultimately do more harm than good and thus we are not under obligation to aid development in such cases. Singer's position allows us to make our offers of assistance conditional

on effective steps being taken to reduce the birth-rate. Other conditions may also be imposed where countries refuse to take other sorts of action needed to render our assistance effective. Such is Singer's position.

These sketches of Singer's and Hardin's positions may have seemed too lengthy to be mere sketches and yet we will find that Hardin has more to add to the sketch I have presented of his reasoning (mostly to be found in the more recent of his works). Singer also has more criticism of Hardin. But, as I suggested earlier, we should now be able to address the question as to what extent Singer has undermined Hardin's conclusions.

FOOTNOTES FOR SECTION ONE

1. W. Aiken and H. La Follette, "Introduction", World Hunger and Moral Obligation, eds. W. Aiken and H. La Follette (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977), pp.2-3.

2. G. Hardin, "Living on a Lifeboat", in BioScience, vol.24, no.10 (October 1974), pp.561-568, and "Lifeboat Ethics: The Case Against Helping the Poor", in Psychology Today 8 (September 1974), pp.38-43, 123-126.

3. This tragedy is more fully explained in G. Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons", in Science, vol.162 (1968), pp.1243-1248, and see also his The Limits of Altruism, chapter 2, "Responsibility in Systems" (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1977), pp.28-45. Criticism of the use of Hardin's "The Tragedy of the Commons" to establish a reason or basis for the existence of governments may be found in Michael Taylor, Anarchy and Cooperation (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1976).

4. P. Singer, "Rich and Poor", in his Practical Ethics, chapter 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp.158-181.

5. For a review of the background and origins of the concept of triage see G. Hardin, Promethean Ethics, chapter IV, "Triage" (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980).

6. Self-reliance is living within the carrying capacity of the area and is distinguished from self-sufficiency--see Hardin, The Limits of Altruism, p.63.

7. Since as North Americans we generally fall into Singer's grouping referred to as the absolutely affluent, I sometimes use the terms 'us', 'we', and 'our' et cetera in reference to the absolutely affluent. This usage should be identifiable from the context of the expressions.

SECTION TWO

HARDIN FAILS TO JUSTIFY HIS ADVICE

In this section the debate reviewed in the previous section between Hardin and Singer is continued. Since Singer actually refers to Hardin and his arguments while Hardin does not so respond to Singer, we might begin by considering Singer's arguments against Hardin in greater detail. Even so, beginning with a discussion of Singer in a section which purports to show that Hardin fails to justify his advice may seem strange, or at least not fully motivated. The main reason for beginning with Singer is as follows: Hardin is one of the most fiery supporters of the third possible position; that is, he believes sending aid to be wrong. But Hardin's writings have been subject to much criticism. A number of thinkers do not regard Hardin as a serious thinker. Since I have chosen Hardin as my method of dealing with the third position, I may have opened myself to the charge of having unfairly weakened the third position by choosing to deal with it in a form not completely in good repute. While unfairly weakening a position one does not agree with may be tempting, ability to deal with weak opposition is of little credit and of little interest. So before the final part of this section, where a critique of Hardin will be offered, we will undertake a discussion considering some possible responses Hardin might make in defense of his position (in the second part). Not all of the responses will be completely plausible or consistent with the interpretation of his position as suggesting the moral obligation to not send aid. But this interpretation of his position may be able to offer significant responses to the criticism offered by Singer. Thus we begin with a closer consideration of Singer's criticism of Hardin.

A. Singer and Triage

The first thing we should notice about Singer's criticism of Hardin is that he has not moved very far from Hardin's conclusions in at least one important respect: He still allows for the policy of triage. Rather than eliminating policies of triage from questions of foreign aid, Singer has only limited the applicability of those policies. Singer's triage policies would divide needy nations into only two groups rather than three: (i) those which refuse to take steps to make aid effective (where and when "steps" are needed) and (ii) those which do undertake (when need be) the measures which make our help effective. Singer's argument places us under obligation only when to the best of our knowledge there is some prospect of reducing poverty in the long run.[1] Thus we are under obligation by Singer's reasoning only to be the second (ii) of the groups of needy nations: those willing to take action to maintain the effectiveness of our aid; we are not under obligation towards those who refuse to make (or to allow) our aid to be effective, (i). Thus Singer still allows for triage or sorting, although with limited applicability.

Someone might object on Singer's behalf that he may be interpreted as offering an order of priority to be used when choosing groups to receive aid. That is to say, we would give to all if we had the resources, but just in case we do not have the resources we will begin with these nations, (ii); the nations in group (i) simply have the lowest priority, but we will help even these when we are able. (The phrase "when we are able", we shall soon see, might need to be interpreted as "when we are able to aid both group (i) and their profuse offspring to be".) Nevertheless, that even this interpretation of Singer's position is legitimately referred to as allowing for triage follows from the concept of triage: Triage offers adivce as to which groups to help whenever the resources for help are too scarce to meet the need for help. But whenever the resources for help are too scarce to meet the need for help, Singer's programme advises us which groups to help, i.e. which groups have priority. Singer is aware of the fact that part of the concept of

triage is that it applies to situations of scarcity.[2] Notice that if triage is conceived primarily as a method of allocating scarce resources in aid situations then Singer allows for triage while Hardin recommends triage or perhaps even posits an obligation to use this method. On the other hand, if triage is conceived primarily as a policy of sorting the potential recipients of some benefit (at the origin of the word was the concept of sorting), then Singer may be read as recommending triage. Singer has not argued against the method of triage in principle but only against certain of Hardin's applications of the method. Even so, some triage positions will be better than others.

Nevertheless Singer's triage policy is not very specific. It specifies only that we are under obligation to aid the one group, (ii), and not the other, (i). But what is our moral relationship to the group which we are not obligated to aid? Singer has ruled out only one of the four possibilities: (1) above (that the affluent are obligated to feed the starving and it would be blameworthy not to). He has not specified which of the other possibilities he would support: might sending aid to group (i) still be praiseworthy but since we are not obligated to send aid to them not doing so is not blameworthy? Might sending no aid to group (i) be obligatory making the sending of aid to this group wrong? Or might sending no aid to this group be praiseworthy although sending aid not blameworthy? We know what Hardin's answer would be: We are obligated not to send help to nations in Singer's group (i).[3] Perhaps we should reconsider Singer's main argument to see if it might contain any suggestion as to which position towards group (i) Singer might consistently maintain. If no such single position exists he may maintain the need to proceed case by case according to the amount of gain over sacrifice in each.

First we might ask how Singer's argument was used to rule out the obligation to aid nations in group (i); this may give us some clues as to how to rule out or select other of the possibilities. Singer's principle that "[i]f we can prevent something bad without sacrificing anything of comparable [moral] significance, we ought to do it" would be

applicable within and towards nations in group (i) if the principle is applicable at all. The applicability of the principle does not vary from group (i) to group (ii). Supposedly, if the principle holds, it holds under all the specified conditions. For example, were it within my ability, I would be every bit as obligated to rescue a drowning child from a pond in a nation of group (i) as I would be if she were in a pond in a nation of group (ii). Nor is Singer's second premise responsible for the change in our obligation. Absolute poverty is bad in both groups of nations. So the third of Singer's premises must be responsible for the change in our obligations between group (i) and group (ii). The third premise which Singer (as noted earlier) admitted as most controversial reads: "[t]here is some absolute poverty we can prevent without sacrificing anything of comparable moral significance".[4] This premise may be regarded as false in relation to nations of group (i), but true in relation to group (ii) nations, and thus is likely the premise which leads Singer to conclude we are not obligated to send aid to nations of group (i).

Nevertheless, the reason given by Singer for our lack of obligation towards nations of group (i) is not that this third premise is false in relation to group (i) but that "we have no obligation to make sacrifices that, to the best of our knowledge, have no prospect of reducing poverty in the long run".[5] Even so, his reason for claiming that we have no obligation when there is no prospect of reducing poverty is probably that in most cases if there is no prospect of reducing poverty then the third premise is false: It is false that there is some absolute poverty which we can prevent without sacrificing anything of comparable moral significance. Part of the problem here is that Singer is not clear as to whether 'preventing absolute poverty without the sacrifice of anything of comparable moral significance' and 'reducing poverty in the long run' are meant as equivalent expressions. Adding to this confusion is the unclarity of what he means by 'reducing': does he mean reducing poverty from its present level or from some cumulative future level which might have been reached had we not given aid.[6] In order to proceed we

shall simply assume that Singer could avoid these unclarities and would do so in a manner which attempts to be consistent with his basic argument.

Consistent with Singer's basic argument is the proposition that the argument cannot establish an obligation except when its premises are true. Where one (or more) of the premises of the basic argument is false there is no obligation to be inferred--unless some other sound argument can be provided to cover the situation. As I noted earlier the truth value of the first two premises does not seem to change from group (i) to group (ii). But possibly the third premise does. Notice that there are two possible conditions which will make the third premise false. If in some circumstances it is not the case that "there is some absolute poverty we can prevent without sacrificing anything of comparable moral significance", then this may be either because every prevention of absolute poverty we could make involves the sacrifice of something of comparable moral significance, or because no prevention of any absolute poverty is possible in this circumstance. Furthermore, this second condition--the impossibility of preventing absolute poverty--obtains under two further conditions: either when there is no absolute poverty in these circumstances, or when there is absolute poverty but we are powerless in the circumstance to prevent any of it. Which of these conditions renders the third premise of Singer's basic argument false when applied to nations in group (i)?

Since Singer's groupings [(i) and (ii)] apply to <u>needy</u> nations we know that the condition of complete absence of absolute poverty does not obtain within them and thus this condition is eliminated from being the reason for the third premise's falsity in regard to group (i). The condition of assistance being beyond our power may obtain for <u>some</u> nations in group (i): perhaps corruption is so great in some of these countries (that refuse to take steps to ensure the effectiveness of our aid) that all assistance given never actually can prevent any absolute poverty, or (a more likely possibility) some of these countries may have closed themselves to our help as supposedly was the case in China for a number of years. The question as to what 'being beyond our power to

assist' means arises here. Involved are certain assumptions about the limitations of the affluents' powers and abilities. Have the affluent tried to the limits of their power to get around the obstacles of corruption and refusal of aid? Without having tested for the limits of the affluent's power how can we assume to know exactly what is beyond their power to assist? In any case, surely the condition of being beyond the affluent's power to assist is not the case with all countries in group (i). For if all countries in group (i) are beyond our ability to assist then Singer could simply make our aid conditional on our ability to assist rather than making it conditional on the more controversial matter of these countries taking steps to ensure the effectiveness of our aid. Again, surely most nations which are in group (i) are within our ability to assist in preventing some absolute poverty.[7] Notice that since Singer has purposely made the requirement from his argument weak--we must merely be able to prevent <u>some</u> absolute poverty--it remains within our ability to fulfill the requirement even toward most nations of group (i) <u>as a collection</u>. Thus the remaining condition must be called into play: Every prevention of absolute poverty which we undertake in these countries of group (i) involves the sacrifice of something of comparable moral significance.

What could this something of comparable moral significance be which would be sacrificed in aiding these countries in group (i)? What could be of more comparable moral significance to famine and malnutrition if not comparable or greater famine and malnutrition at a later date? If Hardin's arguments are right this is exactly what we could expect from aiding countries which refuse to limit population growth (the primary step required to make much of our aid effective). Singer's remarks about probability are of no help to countries within group (i) since their refusal to take needed action makes Hardin's predictions more certain. Notice now that room for Hardin's considerations and arguments fit neatly within the scope of Singer's exception clause--without sacrificing anything of comparable moral significance (at least as applying to group (i)). In fact, Hardin could argue that since the same type of suffering multiplied by population growth becomes greater suffering in the future, not only is comparable moral

significance sacrificed but something of greater moral significance is sacrificed by sending aid.

I must note at this point that we have not ruled out our obligation for all possible countries in group (i), even though we have accepted that either of two conditions are applicable (supposedly) making Singer's third premise false for this group. Consider this possibility: A nation whose present government refuses to take any measure to limit its population growth when the nation is already overcrowded, and wherein preventing some absolute poverty is within our power. The remaining condition--i.e., that we must sacrifice something of comparable moral significance--may only appear to be the case. Five years from now the government may change and the new government may implement such a strict population control as to avert Hardin's predictions. Thus it could turn out that we were obligated to help the country but only become aware of this after it left group (i). Not all countries in group (i) will remain in this grouping. But few would hold the affluent to an obligation to assist before the country actually leaves group (i). Practical ethics cannot operate on what might be; we must act on the evidence we have. Thus Singer adds the phrase "to the best of our knowledge" when applying the third premise to countries in group (i).[8] Hardin would further argue that "to the best of our knowledge" future governments would have little incentive to make such drastic changes in policy relating to population growth so long as we send aid not conditional on their making changes. Thus we are able to conclude that Singer is consistent with his basic argument in excluding obligation from nations which refuse to take steps (when needed) to make the well-off's assistance effective. The conditions within those nations (group (i)) is such that to the best of our knowledge sending aid (of most any kind within our power to send) will only involve the sacrifice of something of comparable (if not greater) moral significance. This sacrifice in turn renders the third premise of Singer's argument false, thereby relieving the affluent of the obligation normally supported by this argument. (Of course, other arguments may still apply to the situation and provide for obligations.)

Has this review of how Singer's argument might be used to justify the difference in obligations of the affluent towards groups (i) and (ii) provided any clues as to the affluent's precise moral relationship to nations of group (i)? I believe so. In justifying the difference in obligation between these groups we say that Hardin's predictions were more probable for group (i) and that therefore Hardin's predictions could be relied upon in the determination of whether something of comparable moral significance would be sacrificed by the sending of aid. We also noted that we were limited to act according to the best of our knowledge. To the best of our knowledge (at this point) Hardin's predictions do apply to nations of group (i) with a sufficient degree of probability as to provide a basis for at least some moral judgements (i.e. deciding whether obligation applies towards group (i)). Furthermore, to the best of our knowledge, Hardin's predictions are correct in predicting for most countries in group (i) not merely that sending aid requires sacrifices of comparable moral significance but that aiding requires sacrifices of greater moral significance.[9] But certainly Singer's own basic argument places us under obligation not to make sacrifices of greater moral significance.

Consider a variation of Singer's argument. The first premise is Singer's basic principle: "[i]f we can prevent something bad without sacrificing anything of comparable [moral] significance, we ought to do it". The second premise is that the sacrifice of something of greater moral significance is bad; in fact, it is worse that the original evil we were considering preventing. A population crash of the magnitude predicted by Hardin would be worse than the present levels of famine and suffering. The third premise is that this sacrifice of something of greater moral significance can be prevented without the sacrifice of anything of comparable moral significance. That is to say, first, that by not preventing the "something bad" we were originally concerned with we are able to prevent the sacrifice of that which is of greater moral significance,[10] and second, since by definition that which is of greater moral significance is greater than the original bad we were considering preventing, the prevention of the original bad (which must be sacrificed)

is not of comparable moral significance (being lesser to the greater). Thus the conclusion that we are obligated to prevent the sacrifice of anything of greater moral significance. To the best of our knowledge, sending aid to most countries of group (i) will result in the sacrifice of something of greater moral significance and is therefore something which we are obligated to prevent. True, the bad prevented now via the sending of aid would be more certain, but the risk, both in the sense of the amount risked and in the sense of the likelihood of losing this amount risked, involved in achieving this immediate gain may be large enough to constitute greater moral significance. Furthermore, even if the risk is not great enough--and perhaps no risk is--to constitute greater moral significance than the certain prevention of some evil, we will not wish to judge the moral significance of acts, nor the probability of that significance, on the immediate results of the act. Thus while it may be certain that sending aid will prevent some immediate harm, it is not certain that sacrificing the sending of aid will be of even comparable moral significance to the sacrifice of the results of sending no aid. In fact, the opposite seems to be the case; sacrificing the results of sending no aid to most countries of group (i) will be the most likely, in the longer run, to involve the sacrifice of greater moral significance. (In the discussion of Hardin and the numbers question this claim will be shown to be false in some ways, but since Singer has no answer to it, it stands at this point of the debate.)

This leaves only a few countries from those in group (i) for which the affluent's moral relationship concerning the sending of aid has not been specified. These few countries will be those needy nations which refuse to take the steps needed to make our aid effective, and concerning which our best knowledge leaves us unsure as to whether our sending aid will lead to Hardin's predictions, that is, to a sacrifice of something of greater moral significance; these will be countries which are not very needy or are very likely to change their policy towards making our aid effective.[11] The number of needy countries in group (i) for which, due to the slightness of their poverty, we have good prospects of

reducing absolute poverty both now and in the long run by sending the proper type of aid, while bypassing the non-cooperativeness of their governments are few indeed. The number of countries which according to our best knowledge will probably change their policies towards taking steps that will make our aid effective without our providing the incentive of tying our aid to this condition are even more rare.[12] But for these few countries it is not clear whether Singer would support the position that sending aid is praiseworthy though not obligatory, or the position that sending no aid is praiseworthy though not obligatory. He might argue that since the present absolute poverty in these few countries is certain and since our best knowledge does not indicate whether a greater or even comparable moral sacrifice in the future will be highly probable or not, sending aid to these few countries would be praiseworthy though not obligatory, or he may simply reason that we should proceed case by case when considering these countries.

Thus we see that for the most part Singer's triage is as severe as Hardin's for there are only a few countries in group (i) which we are not obligated not to aid--those of which our knowledge is uncertain whether aiding will result in a sacrifice of something of greater moral value (including those of which we are unsure whether to place in group (i) or group (ii)). So Singer cannot criticize Hardin for advocating triage (or for advocating that we not aid certain groups because it is wrong to do so). Singer must criticize Hardin rather for not providing stricter limits to the groups which triage policy obligates us not to help. Singer's group (i) is indeed much smaller than the group of nations Hardin would keep from our aid; Singer would allow an obligation not to aid for only a very limited number of countries.

B. Hardin Defended

One way by which Singer limits the number of countries we are obligated not to help and supposedly increases the number of countries we ought to help is by considering the probability of the possible outcomes

of the possible courses of action; thus limiting the applicability of Hardin's arguments.[13] Nevertheless, a number of replies are available to Hardin in response to Singer's consideration of probabilities.

First, Hardin might note that probability can cut both ways. Thus, when we were discussing nations of group (i) we observed that a country's refusing to take steps to make aid effective increased the probability of a sacrifice of something of greater moral significance. Even so, certainly other situations exist where the probability of Hardin's predictions coming true (and thus the sacrifice of a greater moral significance) is similarly increased. These situations may even apply to countries of group (ii). Thus, that we might be obligated not to send aid to some countries of group (ii) is still a possibility, and this indicates an inadequacy within Singer's triage groupings; that we in general have no obligation to send aid to group (i) nations is quite accurate, but that we are in general obligated to send aid to the group (ii) nations is not so accurate for the very opposite obligation is possible here. For example, the exceeding of the carrying capacity of some country may be such that a point of "no return" exists where giving aid after this point is reached only increases the disaster which is inevitable due to the extent to which the carrying capacity has been exceeded. Or again, good evidence may exist showing that even though a particular government is taking steps to make our aid effective, it is simply too weak to actually succeed. Another possibility might be the existence of good evidence showing that a country will change its policies in such a way that our aid will no longer be effective. Of course very few of the countries of group (ii) will be in situations where we will be obligated not to send aid because we have good evidence that sending help will almost certainly bring about Hardin's predictions. There may be no such countries at present time, but perhaps in the future some will fall into such circumstances. We must watch for this possibility.[14]

At this point we might note some problems due to Singer's not specifying a precise relationship between probabilities and obligations. He claims that we should choose a benefit only if its greater magnitude

outweighs its uncertainty. (The word "outweighs" here might be misleading in virtue of the apparent assumption that the practical difficulty of putting benefits and probabilities on the same scales can be overcome.) Does Singer mean that moral obligation to choose a benefit only applies when its greater magnitude outweighs its uncertainty? In this case uncertainty is able to reduce and limit moral obligations (when it outweighs the benefit). Or does he mean that we should be morally allowed to choose a benefit only if its greater magnitude outweighs its uncertainty? In this case we would be morally obligated not to choose benefits where the greater magnitude did not outweigh the uncertainty. Are we morally obligated to take the best advantage of probability? If Singer wishes to maintain general obligation towards the countries of group (ii) he may need to maintain this obligation which follows from the latter possible interpretation of his principle concerning probability. I shall return to the question as to why he may need do so presently. On the other hand, the former interpretation is more literally correct (by proper "translation"); 'should' is seldom used to mean 'may' in the sense of 'to be allowed'.

Furthermore, the former interpretation seems to represent a reasonable position towards obligation. First, we would not wish to require that a benefit be certain before we have obligation to choose it--in that case we would have very few obligations; the first interpretation allows for obligations not only to choose benefits which are certain but also to choose those whose benefits outweigh their uncertainty.[15] Secondly, as the probability of the result decreases we would like the obligations A to diminish and at some point to cease. (Obligations A, it will be recalled, are free of moral dilemma; they do not conflict with other obligations of the agent.) For we will wish to keep to a minimum, the number of cases where there are moral obligations A to do some action merely because this action takes best advantage of probability, however slight this advantage might be. In other words we will not want it often to be the case that we are morally obligated (A) to not try for the "long shot". Such an obligation means that inconclusive evidence could

determine our obligations so completely that slightly less conclusive evidence would count for nothing, and moreover, that in cases of conflict we are actually obligated to not act on the slightly less conclusive evidence. It seems rather arbitrary that so great a difference in our strict obligations should be dependent on minute differences of evidence or probability, because we would then be obligated (A) to not take moral risks. The possibility of being allowed to take moral risks might not seem important when the benefits are known to be equal in all respects other than probability, but in cases where the benefits are not commensurable so that their values in relation to each other is not determinate (recall that this is a possible cause of moral dilemma), ruling out the possibility of moral risk leaves no allowance for the one who may have a skill in judging such cases because of practice in the past or because of insight. An example of just such a case is the one where the police officer must decide whether or not to engage in a high-speed car chase. The probability of catching a dangerous criminal may be greater than the probability of innocent parties being killed (if the choice occurs during the night), the relation of the values of the alternative benefits is not fully determinate, but when innocent parties are killed in such cases we question the police <u>decision</u> making policy.[16] I suspect that we will want even the obligations A of practical reason to function so as to allow as much as possible for "betting against the odds" when the advantage of the "odds" is slight. When the probability of the better result following from one action is only slightly better than the probability of the better result following from some other mutually exclusive action, then performing the action less likely to produce the better result does not seem to be so much more blameworthy than performing the action more likely to produce the better result, as to cause an obligation A to perform the one and to not perform the other. Obligations B, on the hand, being those obligations which may apply to both of two mutually exclusive actions, might be ranked according to which act is the more likely to produce the <u>better</u> result. When the results of two conflicting obligations B are equal or not comparable in value, then of course, neither

of the mutually exclusive acts is the more likely to produce the better result, since neither result can be said to be better, although the one act may still be more likely to produce its result. In such a case the two conflicting obligations B would be equally ranked. Other ranking schemes for obligations B might assign greater weight to the role of the probability of an act producing its intended result. For example, when all the criteria used for ranking conflicting obligations B balance in decisive power (and when the value of two results are incomparable they might well be considered to balance in decisive power--that is, power to guide one's decisions) except for a difference in the probability of the acts (of fulfilling the obligations) producing their intended results, then one might reasonably allow the difference in probability some decisive power, or in other words, some consideration in ranking the conflicting obligations B. But even within these other ranking schemes, where the equal ranking of conflicting obligations B is much more rare, a difference in the ranking of two obligations B does not completely resolve the moral dilemma. Since obligations B are to be distinguished from prima facie obligations, one might expect that the discovery that a particular obligation B is not the highest ranked among conflicting obligations would not completely absolve one from its requirement. The fact that a particular obligation B is ranked lower than the obligation B it is in conflict with, may in Ruth Barcan Marcus' words, "provide an explanation, an excuse, or a defense [for not fulfilling it], but I want to claim that this is not the same as denying [the lower ranked] of the obligations altogether".[17] But since the lower ranked obligation is not denied altogether, there remains some excuse for one who fulfills the lower ranked obligation B in conflict with others, leaving the higher obligations unfulfilled, even though he would have had more excuse for leaving the lower ranked obligation unfulfilled by carrying out the higher ranked. This difference between having some excuse for one's action or having more excuse does not seem great enough to justify a strong obligation to always act so as to have more excuse for so acting, even though always acting so might be considered morally praiseworthy.

Whether or not one accepts such claims about the lower ranked obligations B, where the difference in the probability is slight, the difference in the ranking will also be slight, and one might question whether slight differences in the ranking of obligations B could result in the strong obligation Singer hopes to establish in the world hunger situation. Where probability leaves us too uncertain of the results of an action we would expect either to be relieved of any strong obligation to act one way or the other, or simply to have no obligations A in such situations --even if the results of the one action were both more probable and producing benefit of greater magnitude. As I said this seems to me to be a reasonable position towards obligation's relation to probability. I do not have the space to establish the reasonableness of this position now; it is enough that it is in agreement with the more literal interpretation of Singer's principle concerning probability and obligation, and that Hardin might use it to at least question the conclusions of Singer's remarks on probability against Hardin's position.

What then of this other possible interpretation of Singer's principle concerning probability (i.e. that we are obligated to take best advantage of probability)? Why might Singer need such an interpretation of his principle? Earlier we noted that Hardin might possibly use probability to his advantage since sometimes his predictions would be more certain concerning some countries. Now, we will see that he might also argue that probability may also be used to weaken the certainty of any benefit resulting from following Singer's advice. That a net benefit will result from overseas aid is not at all certain--only a temporary benefit is certain. Singer himself admits that population growth forecasts are extremely fallible and claims that the theory of 'demographic transition' is merely "at least as plausible as any other". If we are not obligated to follow Hardin's advice because of the uncertainty of its actually resulting in overall benefit (i.e. the prevention of the most evil), then it would seem we might not be obligated to follow Singer's advice either, since its actually resulting in overall benefit is dependent on a theory which is merely as plausible as any other.[18]

If Singer wishes to maintain the obligation to aid here, he needs to argue either that the long term benefits of following his advice will be of greater magnitude than their uncertainty (i.e. that probability favours his advice by a wide margin), or that we should understand his principle concerning probability according to the latter possible interpretation: that we are morally obligated to take best advantage of probability (i.e. even when the advantage is slight). Singer does not present arguments in either of these directions. Thus one might wonder whether on Singer's account we have any obligation one way or the other regarding the giving of aid even to countries of group (ii) because Singer seems to admit that probability does not favour the long term benefits of his advice by a wide margin (at least not for all countries of group (ii) and certainly not for countries of group (i)), and we have serious doubts as to the correctness of being morally obligated to take best advantage of slightly better probabilities. In this way Hardin could claim that probability cuts both ways.

A second reply available to Hardin concerning Singer's remarks on probability are the remarks he has already made concerning the 'demographic transition'. This transition takes time.[19] The right type of aid may speed up the transition, but will it come in time? Given an indefinite amount of time it may be as plausible as any other population theory, but we are not working with an indefinite amount of time. Hardin claims that there may be more evidence against such a transition than there is for it, and there is no indubitable instance of its actually happening since approximately 1954. But Singer needs this 'demographic transition' both to make more probable the net benefit of giving foreign aid, and to make more improbable the net benefit of not giving foreign aid.

Thirdly, another reply available to Hardin against Singer is that even if the 'demographic transition' was likely to come in time should proper development occur within countries of group (ii), then, that our aid (even with the change in type) would produce net benefit, still is not certain. One reason for his arguing this might be based on what is called Hardin's Law: "We can never do merely one thing."[20] Whatever

methods we choose in sending the type of aid that will hasten the 'demographic transition', we do not know the side effects of these methods in the third world cultures involved. That provision of contraceptives, land reform, agricultural assistance, education, emancipation of women, rise in standard of living and economic security, each may have side effects on third world societies which cause a net result of more harm than good, is a possibility, and one for which it remains open to Hardin to argue that it is probable (either in whole or in part). Changing the type of aid we give to that which we think will hasten the 'demographic transition' does not automatically mean that we will be giving the right type of aid for the particular countries involved.[21] It is not certain that our help will have only desired effects, or that the desired effects will outweigh the undesired. A further reason Hardin might give for this lack of certainty is our past record in giving aid. Hardin gives a number of examples of how outside "help" has in the past actually hurt countries.[22] Because of this evidence he suggests that the word 'intervention' is more neutral than the word 'help'. He also suggests that regarding intervention as "Guilty until proven innocent" is a safer guide to our actions.[23] Our past record in giving international aid that results in net benefit rather than harm for the recipient is not good and, according to the views of some, provides good inductive evidence against the giving of aid in general. (We will find it necessary to question this claim in our critique of Hardin.) Hardin has the following evidence in mind: "In addition to the substantial contribution of other countries, the United States itself spent $80 billion on genuine development aid (leaving out military aid that masqueraded as such.)"[24] This aid, given over the past twenty-five years, has not produced generally good results; the gap between the rich and poor seems as great as ever. The success of the Marshall Plan which spent twelve billion dollars over three to four years does not seem to compete with the magnitude of this twenty-five year, eighty billion dollar, failure. When we also consider the vast differences between the society which was the recipient of the Marshall Plan aid and those which we have been trying to aid for the

past twenty-five years (e.g. differences in past histories, differences in literacy rates), the balance of evidence does seem to be in Hardin's favour. We have little other evidence to go on. The evidence may not be strong enough to provide obligation not to give aid (to countries of group (ii), or groups (a) and (c) of Hardin's triage groupings); perhaps the evidence is not even strong enough to make it praiseworthy not to give aid to countries in these groups, but certainly the evidence against the effectiveness of aid is strong enough to relieve us from obligation A to give help, or so Hardin might reply concerning the obligation Singer argues for.

A summary of the reply available to Hardin towards Singer's position is now in order. First, Hardin is able to show that Singer's position involves triage just as severe as his own although somewhat more limited. Secondly, Hardin can point out that it is possible that Singer's argument would support an obligation not to give aid even when the country is cooperative, if some other factor provided for high probability that aid would result in Hardin's forecasts coming true. Even though no such countries may presently exist, this raises questions concerning the adequacy of Singer's criterion for his triage groupings, viz., the receiving country's cooperativeness. Thirdly, Singer's consideration of probability is incomplete and proper consideration of probability's relation to obligation may actually reduce or remove the obligation to aid Singer argues for. Even though the suffering Singer wants to eliminate is certain, this does not make the net benefit of sending aid certain. The probability of net benefit being produced by following Singer's advice rather than Hardin's is further reduced by the consideration of the questionableness of the 'demographic transition' on which Singer is too reliant, and by consideration of the possibility of undesirable side effects to what we might now consider a proper type of aid--especially in the light of our past "aid" record (i.e., we have been shown wrong before).

Singer adds further criticism of Hardin's position in a book review of Hardin's The Limits of Altruism.[25] Hardin's position in this

book, that pure altruism exists only in smaller groups or over short periods of time and in certain circumstances, and his Cardinal Rule of Policy, never to ask a person to act against his own self-interest, presents opposition to Singer's program for mass international aid by suggesting the program is impossible. Singer claims that the blood donor systems of England, Holland, Australia and elsewhere provide a counter-example to Hardin's claims. Even so, Hardin has replies available within the book itself. First, acting against self-interest, Hardin stipulates, is a matter of acting so as to produce a loss in the likelihood of one's reproductive success. Reproductive success involves maintaining and strengthening one's germ line; it is the drive to ensure for oneself descendents as far into the future as possible. Hardin stipulatively defines both egoism and altruism so that they are conceptually linked to the interest in promoting one's germ line. The egoist is one who acts to maximize his own reproductive success, even when the act is neutral in its effect on the reproductive success of others. The altruist is one who acts to benefit the reproductive success of others even when the act is neutral or harmful in its effect on his own reproductive success.[26] Acts which produce gain both for one's own reproductive performance and for others are not considered to be either altruistic or egoistic by Hardin, but rather they are stipulated to be cooperative. Donating blood, being conducive to the health of both the donor and the recipient, should generally lead to gain (if anything) for both in the area of reproductive performance. Thus, the blood donor systems are not examples of altruism as Hardin stipulatively defines it, but rather they exemplify cooperation. Secondly, Hardin seems to stipulate that pure altruism should be completely disinterested--emotionally as well as biologically. Thus that guilt, shame, obligation and moral enforcement are a part of the blood donor system spoils its purity as an example of altruism, even if the definition of altruism were expanded to include emotional loss and gain.[27] On such a definition of altruism the mere rumour that giving blood is conducive to the donor's health would spoil the blood donor systems as examples of altruism, since believing that one is doing something good for one's health is for most people an emo-

tional gain.

Hardin believes that people donate blood to avoid bad feelings or to feel healthier, rather than donating out of genuine concern for others. Hardin does not seem to consider the possibility that feelings of guilt, shame and obligation might be indicative of something more than psychological loss--that is, of something which is in fact shameful, etc. Similarly, he does not consider that "moral enforcement" may be indicative of what is morally right or wrong. More importantly, Hardin does not seem to realize that his special stipulative definitions may remove him from the debate about the existence of large-scale altruism. The type of altruism which Singer argues should be widespread is not the variety stipulated by Hardin. For the absence of the widespread existence of Hardin's stipulated altruism to threaten Singer's aid position with impossibility, Hardin needs to further argue that Singer's aid position requires that variety of altruism stipulated by Hardin's definitions. That is, Hardin needs to show that if people give to the point of almost sacrificing something of comparable moral significance, then they benefit the reproductive success of others while not benefitting their own reproductive success. This is the result Hardin might hope to show by his arguments for the danger of population crashes when carrying capacities are exceeded. Even so Hardin will need to give further argumentation here because Singer could include 'giving that unreasonably increases the danger of a population crash' as 'aid which sacrifices something of comparable moral significance'. There is a further problem for Hardin here in that his stipulation of altruism may be too strict for him to defend the claim that it is not widespread, and if he is able to defend this claim similar moves will be available to Singer. Hardin's definition of altruism is strict in that it includes as altruistic the one who benefits another's reproductive success by actions having no effect on one's own reproductive success. It will be difficult for Hardin to maintain that this "strict" altruism is not widespread. The blood donor system may even be an example since even though giving blood might be conducive to health, this in itself does not show the action to not be

neutral in regard to one's reproductive success (e.g. eunuchs give blood). Again, Hardin will need to provide further arguments. Hardin's definition might aid him here by stipulating that those who give for the sake of emotional gain not be considered altruists, this might suggest that the blood donor system is not an example of altruism, but it also suggests that voluntary giving by individuals to the prevention of absolute poverty does not require widespread altruism so strictly definded, since many will give aid that prevents some absolute poverty for the sake of some emotional gain. If Hardin hopes to defend his position along these lines his position will require considerable more supporting argument.

Singer also criticizes Hardin for the inconsistency of his position in that his concern to create altruistic institutions for posterity's sake offends against his "Cardinal Rule".[28] But need it be so interpreted? The "Cardinal Rule" is that we should never ask anyone to act against their own self-interest, which means never ask anyone to act against the survival of their own germ line. Since I cannot guarantee future members of my germ line positions of advantage indefinitely (as history should teach us), I may be wiser to work for a tradition of altruism towards posterity in general. I cannot promote the survival of my germ line if I allow the interests of posterity to be disregarded to the point where survival of our race will be in danger, even if the danger is in the distant future. The comfortable survival of the race is in my interest because it is in the interest of my germ line. Posterity's inability to return the favour is irrelevant. Even so, an inconsistency remains between the interpretation of Hardin as being concerned with moral obligations and his "Cardinal Rule". For if we hold that morality involves the consideration of the interests of others such that one's own interests do not count for more simply because they are one's own (as Singer holds), then morality may, on occasion, ask a person to do what is against his own self-interest. We will need either a different conception of morality, or an interpretation of the "Cardinal Rule" which allows for moral obligations even when they conflict with self-

interest. One way by which a compromise between the claims of morality and the "Cardinal Rule" might be achieved is to regard the "Cardinal Rule" as an expression of the fifth source of moral value mentioned in the introduction. The fifth source of moral value was the moral value of being able to work towards the completion of one's own projects. Hardin could then be interpreted as claiming that in instances of conflicting moral values, the value of one's own projects and undertakings should be given priority. But if the sources of moral value are not commensurate or fully comparable, as we have postulated by our claim that conflicting sources of moral value are a source of moral dilemmas, then we do not know that any one of the sources should always take precedence. Even so, this interpretation of Hardin would allow him to argue for the priority of the value of one's own projects in cases of moral value conflicts without opening his position to the charge of inconsistency. For he is simply arguing that one source of moral value should be given priority in cases of conflict with the other sources, and this allows him to continue to have moral concerns, which has been our interpretation of his position. The project which Hardin seems to believe most people have as their own is that of ensuring descendents for oneself, as far into the future as possible. Of course, Hardin need not maintain that the value of one's own projects should have priority in conflicts; he might simply maintain that as a matter of fact this value of one's own projects does take priority--at least in situations requiring widespread voluntary individual actions. These are precisely the situations Singer is considering in this debate with Hardin. The actions of most people in such conflict situations tend to support Hardin's claim of fact (even though this claim is not supported by the actions of most people in other conflict situations--e.g. when there is enforcement either from laws, from popular opinion, or merely from tradition, then, it may be argued, most people do not give the value of their own projects priority). The best policies then, would take this fact into consideration. This "Cardinal Rule" suggests to ethicists that they, as a matter of policy, develop and support moral theories which will be

in the interests of the most people when these theories involve situations requiring individual's voluntary actions. A morality which claims that the value of one's own projects should be given priority when it conflicts with other sources of moral value (in the sort of situations we are considering), would be such a moral theory, and thus not inconsistent with the "Cardinal Rule".

Singer furthermore finds fault with Hardin for writing as if "foreign aid" were equivalent to "food aid"; other forms of aid may be needed and may work. On the other hand, as we have just noticed, Hardin does have somewhat of a case against aid in general on the basis of our past record and the fact that we can never do just one thing. Singer again raises the possibility of a 'demographic transition', this time giving more evidence for it--but presenting no case against Hardin's position towards it (possibly because Hardin dealt with it in "Living on a Lifeboat" rather than in the book Singer reviewed).

Lastly, Singer correctly notes that Hardin does not review other causes of poverty, but deals only with the exceeding of carrying capacities. Nevertheless, Hardin still may reply that identifying these other causes of poverty does not entail that we will automatically be able to send aid which will result in net benefit to the recipients. We do not know all the side effects of tampering with these other causes.

Thus we see that there are answers available to Hardin in response to most of Singer's criticisms. Nevertheless, Singer does not take up all possible criticisms of Hardin's position. In particular three important lines of criticism have been brought against Hardin's position which we have not yet dealt with. Hardin has possible answers for each of these areas of criticism.

The first criticism we will deal with is mentioned by Singer although not taken up against Hardin by him.[29] This is the argument that Hardin simply has his facts wrong. This accusation is leveled at Hardin in various forms. Some have argued that the poor nations are not the most densely populated; in fact, some of the richest are the most densely populated.[30] But Hardin's argument is not based on the density of

the poor in relation to their area of land; his argument concerns the density of the poor in relation to the carrying capacity of the land, and a land's carrying capacity does not necessarily depend on its area.[31] Others argue that the 'Food Crisis' has been greatly exaggerated by both pro-aid groups and alarmists.[32] These people reason that the earth can comfortably support many more people than it is presently supporting. Perhaps the metaphor should be changed: The rich are in a wasteful luxury liner while the poor do not fit in their lifeboats.[33] Or perhaps the metaphor which pictures the rich and the poor as all in the same lifeboat with the rich taking up more space and supplies than they need to survive is more accurate.[34] According to such a metaphor, the fact that the poor are slowly sinking means that the entire boat is sinking. The rich remain complacent merely because the hole (or holes) is not on their side of the boat. Such a picture applied to the world hunger situation recognizes and emphasizes the interdependence of all peoples. (This concept will be revived to play a role in our critique of Hardin.) Hardin does have an objection to this metaphor, as it suggests that we should consider the carrying capacity of the whole planet rather than of individual nations, when in fact there is no one in control of the whole planet; so keeping the whole boat afloat will be more difficult than the metaphor indicates. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that some of the poor are demanding that the rich "bail them out" rather than plug the leaks. That is, some of the poor demand sovereignty over their population growth while expecting the rich to continue to provide aid. Furthermore, Hardin objects to dealing with the planet as a whole because failure on such a large scale would be worse than localized failures. Hardin wants to keep any population crashes that might occur local so that civilization will be able to survive on this planet. So Hardin can give some reason for not accepting other metaphors. Nevertheless Hardin's metaphor is flawed even given the situation he admits. He admits that two thirds of the planet are poor but that the poor are in lifeboats; later he pictures fifty in a rich lifeboat with one hundred in the water around it pleading for help. This suggests not that two thirds are in

overcrowded boats but that two thirds are actually in the water and about to go under. Even if the two thirds representing the world's poor are double their (safe) carrying capacity (i.e. one hundred with only one boat), then by Hardin's account there should be seventy in the poor's boat, thirty in the water and fifty in the boat of the rich. When we consider this revised metaphor together with the evidence that there is a great deal of waste and that we are able to increase the carrying capacity (perhaps by a few small inflatable dingies) we can see that the situation is perhaps within our power to correct.

Singer notes two replies to such criticism. First, the resources of this planet are finite and the population is growing too fast, so that if we have not yet exceeded this planet's carrying capacity we soon may. Second, while we may be able to increase the carrying capacity, development must take place at full speed to just keep abreast of population growth (much less end absolute poverty).[35] Hardin might add that his concept of carrying capacity does not require numerical accuracy for its employment. Without numerical knowledge we can observe whether the signs indicate that the carrying capacity has been exceeded: Does the population suffer malnutrition? Or does the environment undergo certain forms of degradation?[36] Hardin illustrates this point by reference to the deer population of Wisconsin. Before 1943 there were an estimated 500,000 deer in the state. This was too many so an open season on all deer was authorized. Officials were severely criticized when they admitted the estimated number of deer in the state was a "pure guess". The criticism was mistaken. To know whether the deer carrying capacity of the state was being exceeded, it was not necessary to know either the number of the deer or the area of the state; all one needed to know was whether the deer showed signs of malnutrition and whether the environment, especially that part which supplies the food for the deer, is deteriorating. Hardin recognizes that the concept of carrying capacity will be more complex for humans. For example, we have been able to increase the carrying capacity of our environment via technology. Natural and man-made wonders can increase the carrying capacity of an area be-

cause of the increased commerce brought about by tourism. Even so, widespread poverty and malnutrition are present in our population. Furthermore, those parts of our environment which we use to support ourselves are showing the signs of strain. In Africa, forest is removed to provide farmland, but without the forest the land deteriorates. Food is not our only demand on the environment; in the Himalayas the forests are slowly being removed for fuel and shelter. The loss of trees in the Himalayas means the loss of soil which supports trees, and in turn more severe floods in the lands below the mountains. "The creation of useful things is always accompanied by the creation of noxious by-products... which take still more energy to process into less noxious substances."[37] Both signs of having exceeded the carrying capacity are present in various areas of our human population. By such criteria Hardin's analysis is accurate enough.

The second criticism of Hardin's position is that if we practice his advice, third, fourth and fifth world peoples and governments will become frustrated enough to terrorize and war for our provisions.[38] India has nuclear weapons; South Africa either has or soon will have nuclear weapons; as technology and information spread so will capacities to create and use nuclear arms. Of course, those with the actual capacity to war will not be those actually suffering absolute poverty and those with the power often do not care about the suffering of those in absolute poverty, and in fact, are also often involved in causing poverty by promoting injustices which favour themselves.[39] Hardin's response to the accusation that his policies would lead to war and terrorism is that war has simply become too expensive for even the well-off; the poor will simply not be able to afford war.[40] Terrorism, on the other hand, will always be with us anyway; terrorism, furthermore, cannot generally be bought off. We will have to deal with terrorism anyway and war is too expensive so we have little to fear from retaliation by the poor. (We will need to reconsider Hardin's position towards war and terrorism later.)

The third criticism of Hardin is that concern for morality and

justice should take precedence over our concern to survive, or have our species survive (or have our germ line survive).[41] Many, perhaps most, will find such a view to be extreme. The demand for equality at the cost of survival does not seem to give proper recognition to the fourth and fifth sources of moral value mentioned earlier. The fourth source is the value of perfectionist goals or the greatness of civilization. A major population crash within our species would end many worthwhile endeavours including much of the work of science and mathematics, medical research, artistic expression, as well as other valued achievements of great civilization such as the ready availability of information and transportation, and the sophisticated social institutions themselves. The fifth source of value is the value our personal endeavours take on once we have started them. Obviously, a large population crash would put an end to many of the personal projects of many. But even if one does not accept the value of perfectionist ends and personal projects to be possible sources of moral dilemma because one believes the other sources of value always take precedence in a conflict, and even if one does not accept these values (perfectionist ends and personal projects) as moral values, the view that a moral concern for equality should always provide the overriding consideration in our decisions may still be regarded as extreme. This is perhaps the view Hardin has in mind when he speaks disdainfully of "pure morality". Consider first Hardin's replies to the extreme version of this criticism and then we will consider briefly one of the possible moderate versions.

Against the criticism that concern for morality (where "morality" is an overriding concern for equality) should take precedence over the concern for survival, Hardin has argued that such attitudes towards morality are selected against. Earlier we noted that those willing to give up their place in the lifeboat because they felt guilty would be eliminated from the boat, and that if we tried for complete justice the result would be complete tragedy: we all sink (or a population crash destroys civilization). Hardin is highly critical of such "pure" moralities and systems of justice. In some senses they are impossible to achieve since

we cannot correct all past injustices nor can we provide people with equal abilities--we cannot provide people of hungry nations with a past tradition that includes a strong work ethic. There has been too long a history of injustices for us to be able (within the time we have) to undo the wrongs started, or to prevent those with egoistic tendencies from seeing how they might use injustice to their own advantage. If others voluntarily follow pure justice the egoists will be selected for (even if egoism is not genetic--i.e. as more people observe its benefits over voluntary morality more will choose egoism). To create equal access to the resources of this planet at this time would create a commons of the whole planet and thus tragedy. Of course some are willing to suffer this consequence, but they will not be in a position to force their opinion on others--this would require unequal resources in power to their favour, and it takes only one to ruin a system of voluntary restraint. Perhaps morality should take precedence over survival but amongst fallible humans it will not, for it will not be selected for. Hardin might respond in this way to the extreme version of this criticism.

There are less extreme versions of the position that morality (again, where "morality" includes an overriding concern for equality) should be given priority to which Hardin must respond differently. A less extreme view might argue that the requirements of morality should always take precedence over the value of survival except in instances of catastrophe. Catastrophe will need careful defining by this view. If the concept of catastrophe includes mere threats to our survival, Hardin could simply agree with the view. The view would be a criticism of Hardin only if catastrophe were so defined that the onus would be on Hardin's position to show that we are facing a catastrophe in the probability of a large population crash. Hardin would have to show that the danger was more than probable. Hardin might reply in two ways. First he would argue that this moral outlook does not place proper emphasis on preparing for and averting catastrophe. The lack of this emphasis may in the long run result in this moral outlook being selected against. Second, he might accept the challenge of this criticism; for unless catas-

trophe is defined so as to beg the question against Hardin's position, even if he cannot show that the situation is a catastrophe now, it may soon become one. His position, even if not implemented until we are ready to call the situation a tragedy, will have prepared us for the morality of that time. Having thus surveyed the responses available to Hardin against the criticism he has received from Singer and others, we must ask what criticisms remain available against Hardin's position.

C. A Critique of Hardin

First we must acknowledge that the answers available to Hardin against the criticisms of his position so far considered have not left his position completely intact. We have interpreted Hardin as supporting the position (3), that the moral requirement of the affluent towards world hunger is such that sending aid is blameworthy and we are obligated not to do so. But we have seen that on considering probability in the situation of world hunger we may lack the degree of certainty needed to provide for any obligations strong enough to decisively guide our actions --those which Hardin supports included. Of course, we also noted that another interpretation of the relation of probability to obligation is possible: namely that we are obligated to take the best advantage of probability, however slight. Even so we are not clear as to which prediction of the results of the two possible courses of action has even a slight advantage in probability since the 'demographic transition' is such a contentious issue. One way to further criticize Hardin's position, then, would be to further weaken the probability of his predictions; doing so will weaken the value of his advice on both interpretations of probability. There are several ways by which we might do this.

First, reconsider Hardin's position towards the danger of the poor turning to violence to satisfy their need for food. Hardin has suggested that this danger will not affect the probability of the value of his advice relative to the advice of those supportive of aid. Two of his main reasons for suggesting this view are the extreme expense of

war, and the fact that terrorism cannot be "bought off". But while it is true that much of modern warfare is expensive, older less expensive methods are still useable. Even though these older methods would not be very effective against the affluent, the affluent would find their forced exercize of modern warfare to be expensive. The existence of nuclear weapons further complicates the issue. Nuclear weapons may be inexpensive enough for the poor to use in war. On the other hand, if the poor do not use nuclear weapons, the affluent might be pressured to not use their own nuclear weapons by the moralists and environmentalists among them. Hardin should know that any increased danger of nuclear war will be a danger for the entire planet. Furthermore, in considering the possibility of war one might consider more than the expense it involves, and especially one ought to consider who stands to lose the most and who stands to gain the most. Expense is of little concern to those who have little to lose and much to gain. Hardin's views on terrorism are also too simplistic. Terrorism cannot be "bought off", and terrorism will be a part of life on this planet for a long time, but if some of the causes of terrorism such as injustice are discovered and removed we will have less terrorism. Notice also that Hardin's treatment of the danger of terrorism neglects the fact that terrorism includes a human element. The significance of the human element in the phenomenon of terrorism is that humans can be communicated with, understandings can develop and compromises can be reached. For these reasons dealing with terrorism is not like dealing with natural calamities where all we can do is "brace" ourselves to the resultant havoc. I shall not attempt a complete discussion of the effects of the danger of war and terrorism on our moral position towards world hunger, but I will make two further comments. First, even if the affluent are morally obligated (A or B) to aid the hungry, the hungry would not be entitled to coerce the affluent into fulfilling this obligation. I do not give an account of the relation of the obligations of the obligated to the rights of those to whom they are obligated, but I do not wish to imply that anyone always has the right to coerce another into fulfilling his moral obligation, and has that right because of that

obligation. Secondly, some might think that if less foreign aid were given for humane concerns, then more foreign aid for military purposes would result, further jeopardizing world peace. This possibility is most real for government foreign aid programs. I suspect that relatively few private individuals donate financially to foreign military aid directly and voluntarily. But Singer makes the point that when none of its people give humane aid voluntarily, a government will assume that its citizens do not care about humane aid, and will cut that part of its program accordingly.[42] Thus, when less support is given for humane aid, either publicly or privately, there is a risk of greater support being given to military aid. From this brief reconsideration of Hardin and the possible dangers from war and terrorism, we might well expect that Hardin's advice could lead to a more precarious world order, and thus the probability of his advice resulting in a future better than that which would result from the giving of humane aid has been lessened.

Reconsider now another reason Hardin's position seemed to increase in probability of net benefit relative to Singer's: That our past aid record provides evidence towards the reasonableness of regarding aid as guilty until proven innocent. This evidence is regarded by some to be good inductive evidence, but is it? As we have noted, Hardin has in mind, for example, the eighty billion dollars the United States has spent on genuine development aid in the past twenty-five years. Hardin wisely does not include in this evidence money spent on military aid, for the successes or failures of that aid does not support conclusions concerning the likelihood of the success or failure of humane aid. Even so, without the inclusion of the results of military aid, it is no longer clear whether the factual basis of this evidence is broad enough to provide good inductive evidence for the conclusion that humane aid should be regarded guilty until proven innocent. For while eighty billion dollars over twenty-five years may sound like a broad base, especially in comparison to the Marshall Plan which spent only twelve billion dollars over only three or four years, we must also consider how thin the aid has been spread among the recipients. Both programmes have spent approxi-

mately the same amount per year, but the foreign aid program directs its funds to twenty times more people than the Marshall Plan did. The fact that the one program has been successful while the other has not suggests the conclusion that we ought to give twenty times the amount we presently give per year just as well as the conclusion that we ought to stop giving aid and rather regard aid as intervention. The good inductive evidence suggests only that aid divided amongst too many recipients should be regarded as guilty until proven innocent and not that all aid should.

Someone supportive of Hardin might object first that there have been other sources of aid other than the United States government over the past twenty-five years so that this aid has not been as "thin" as has been suggested. Also, the foreign aid program has not directed its funds towards all of the twenty times more people continuously, but rather it supports first one group and then another, but in supporting these groups it has never repeated the success that the Marshall Plan had in supporting its group.

Even so, one may respond to these objections, first that various charity groups undoubtedly joined in aiding the reconstruction of Europe, along with the Marshall Plan. Thus the United States government was not the only source of aid to the recipients of the Marshall Plan aid. Furthermore, a much more thorough study would be needed to establish that the groups which have been the recipients of foreign aid have been given aid as intensive as the Marshall Plan aid. Hardin seems to admit that it has not been as intensive,[43] and again, this is not good inductive evidence for Hardin's claims since it also supports the claims that more intensive aid is needed. Finally, the breadth of the factual basis supportive of Hardin's claims may be further weakened by noting that surely some of the eighty billion dollars worth of aid has been successful. Thus, there is some evidence for the claim that humane aid should be regarded as guilty until proven innocent, but this evidence cannot be called good inductive evidence.

As we investigate Hardin's policy of regarding aid guilty until proven innocent we discover that there is a type of humane aid which he

apparently believes has been proven innocent. The aid which he believes has been shown to be innocent is that which occurs in the small group or "tribe". (Note that a "tribe" for the purposes of this discussion is any group one has an interest in.) The essential characteristic of the tribes which Hardin has in mind is that they have a double moral standard --they practice aid toward their own members, and compete with non-members or other tribes.[44] Hardin is, moreover, aware that in our times tribes are no longer confined to geographic areas or to nations.[45] Thus, a particular religious group may be a tribe, so also particular intellectual groups, medical groups, scientific groups or artistic groups, and similarly for many other types of groups. This view of innocent aid leaves Hardin vulnerable to two criticisms.

First, one might criticize Hardin by questioning whether this view of innocent aid is really in keeping with his apparent concern to withhold aid from those countries which have been irresponsible about their population growth. For a government which allows its masses to reproduce freely will find that it can spend more on food for the masses by cutting funding for various sports, arts, sciences, medical, et cetera, groups which will continue to be funded by members living in more well-off areas. Even those countries which do not normally fund these various groups and would not use any funds to feed its masses would find that the support received by these groups from members in better-off societies provides a better general economy enabling more of its citizens to have larger families. Or else these masses would receive the various benefits from these groups (especially relevant here is medicine) without the government's acting responsibly. Thus one might argue that the commons created by tribalistic humane aid would also lead to irresponsibility on the part of the governments of poor countries and so would also lead to large population crashes. Hardin does not seem to be aware of the extent to which tribalistic aid would provide aid to the poor nations. Hardin might object that the tribes ought to practice triage in their aid, even toward their own members. Now perhaps they ought to, but it seems unlikely that this will be to their best interest given their com-

petition with other tribes. For the scarcity which creates this triage situation is not immediate, nor limited to any group; thus any scarcity prevented by one group is a commons to all tribes.[46] Why should a tribe restrict its aid to its members according to triage when competing tribes will not do so? The tribes that do not practice triage towards their own members will have a temporary advantage over those which do since they will be stronger as a group; furthermore, when population crashes come the stronger groups will likely fare better. Also, it takes only one tribe to ruin a system of voluntary restraint; that is, if one tribe does not practice triage towards its own members, then a population crash brought about by this lack of restraint, even though the crash be local to some area, will hurt all other tribes with members in that area. Thus, there seems to be little immediate nor long term benefit from practicing triage within the tribe. In this way one might question whether tribalistic humane aid has really been proven innocent by Hardin's standards; most of the "proof" of the innocence of such aid is from a time when tribes were subject to narrow geographic boundaries.

The second criticism of Hardin's views on tribalistic aid is not concerned with its inconsistency with the rest of Hardin's position (possibly because the value of the rest of Hardin's position is questionable). The second criticism is that Hardin's conception of tribalistic aid is incomplete and not properly conceived. This criticism considers tribalistic aid generally commendable. There might well be an ordering of compassion such that compassion is cultivated best by learning to consider near objects first. Such a view would expect a man to help his own family rather than helping his tribe when he cannot do both. Similarly, one's tribe would take precedence over one's species, and one's species over animal life in general. Specific positions might add greater detail to this ordering. Of course, Hardin limits this ordering to the level of aiding one's tribe; aid for those outside of the tribe is excluded. He provides this limit by claiming that there is competition among tribes--competition for strength and survival. He even suggests that antagonism between tribes makes aid within the tribe possible.[47]

This may have been true in the past, but it does not fit well with our present pluralistic societies, given the tribes Hardin admits. What is the antagonism between the tribe of soccer players and the tribe of mathematicians? Can one not be a member of both tribes? True many tribes are partially exclusive--so that one cannot be both at once a member of the tribe of the literate and the illiterate--but few tribes will be totally exclusive allowing their member membership in no other tribes, and those that are will have few members. The significance of inter-tribal membership is that antagonism between tribes becomes quite limited, and for most people "aiding one's tribe" means "aiding one's tribes". For most of us our aid to our tribe is not a matter of aid to one group exclusive of all others. Why should aid to those beyond the boundaries of my tribes be regarded as "guilty" if it is generally accidental that I am not also a member of some of these other "outside" tribes? Furthermore, some of those whom I support within my tribes support others beyond my tribes since they belong to different tribes than I. Giving aid to one's tribes seems to be a good thing; so it does not seem likely that it could also be indirectly "guilty" (i.e. since it supports those who support those one ought not to support). For these reasons Hardin's principle of regarding aid as guilty until proven innocent does not seem to distinguish humane aid into the groups he wants, because it allows for more aiding than is consistent with his position and arguably allows for general aid to one's species.

Furthermore, not only is the principle of regarding aid as guilty until proven innocent not supported by good inductive evidence and not capable of the work Hardin expects from it, but it is also faulty in principle. That is, even if it met Hardin's expectations of it and were also supported by stronger evidence, there remains some good reasons for not accepting it as a principle. The principle is faulty because such a policy towards aid would make proving its innocence rather difficult since experimenting with giving help would be regarded as taking moral risks against the available evidence. If giving help is regarded as being guilty of harming, then giving help even in experiments would be

regarded as blameworthy until proven praiseworthy. If we followed this policy the only aid which could be proven innocent would be aid that occurred "accidentally" (since unproven aid should not be the result of deliberate actions), but this does not seem to be a reasonable method for discovering valuable forms of aid. We admit that experimentation in the moral realm involves risks, but does it do so to the point of being blameworthy? One would think not, since only some sources of moral value would obligate one to not take such moral risks while other sources obligate one to take such risks. For example, a particular experiment involving moral risks might violate the rights of some, if people have the right not to have their lives placed in risk. On the other hand, the same experiment could have great utility since if it is a successful experiment many lives may be saved (even in the future) and even if the experiment is a failure, showing that a particular type of aid is harmful, then at least we have a specific guideline as to which aid is harmful rather than the general dictum: aid is guilty until proven innocent. It is not clear what the requirements of the other sources of moral value would be regarding the risks of moral experimentation in the world hunger situation, but I would expect that practical reason might require us to carry out broad experimentation with various forms of aid.

Practical reason would find a programme of broad experimentation in the world hunger situation valuable because such a programme would provide a more finely grained control over our future than simply accepting Hardin's dictum. Some might value this fine grained control as a perfectionist goal, believing it to be a significant achievement for a society (or societies). But the value of broad experimentation does not reduce to its value as a perfectionist goal, since even if it were not valued as a perfectionist goal some would value it for its utility: In the long run we will be able to provide proper aid to more people and we will risk less life and health than if we proceed without proper experimentation. Even so, the value of broad experimentation is not reducible to the value of its utility together with its value from being a perfectionist goal since practical reason might decide not to use the findings

of the experimentation for utilitarian ends should such a use conflict with another source of value. For example, in an extreme case where providing proper aid to a society would involve killing a number of its respected leaders, practical reason could advise respecting the leaders' rights to life rather than providing the proper aid. In such a situation we would still be advised as to what aid not to give by the programme of broad experimentation, but Hardin's dictum would also ensure that the wrong type of aid not be given. Now even in situations where we do not act on the utilitarian value of broad experimentation, the experimentation still has value apart from its being valued as a perfectionist end. For the experimentation may be valued for its ability to direct our attention to more options rather than being valued as an achievement by society. Simply, broad experimentation will make us more aware of what can be done to provide good aid, even if other factors determine our actions in some cases.

Someone may object that being more aware of what can be done to provide good aid, is still a matter of utility over the long run even though in particular cases the awareness may fail to result in actions promoting the greatest good and least harm for the most people, and moreover, the value of the awareness in these cases is derived from its utility over the long run. This objection remains debatable, but I suspect that the awareness resulting from broad experimentation would remain valued even in situations where the long range utility of the awareness was unproven. Reason tends to value knowledge and awareness even when it is no great achievement and is of little utility.

Our present concern, the world hunger situation, seems to be one in which the long range utility of broad experimentation is unproven. Thus, a good amount of caution is in order for the experimentation programme. Having been warned by Hardin's predictions, we should not undertake aid experiments lightly. We will want to experiment primarily with those forms of aid holding the greatest prospects for success. The more risky forms of aid, if tested at all, would be tested on the groups most capable of withstanding the particular risks. Not just any programme of

broad experimentation will be valued, but responsible programmes which keep moral risks to a minimum will be greatly valued. Actually, there are two types of moral violation a responsible programme of experimentation will keep to a minimum. First, it will keep to a minimum those cases where the experiment will certainly involve morally blameworthy actions; these cases would be moral dilemmas, but not in the sense of dilemmas created by the experiments (for these also should be kept to a minimum), rather these will be cases where not experimenting is also blameworthy. Second, the responsible experimentation will keep to a minimum even the risk of involving morally blameworthy actions. Thus, by advocating a programme of broad experimentation, we are not advocating needless or irresponsible risk-taking in the moral realm, even though some risk will be involved. Hardin's principle that we regard aid as guilty until proven innocent might not seem faulty when compared to just any programme of experimenting with aid, but it does seem faulty in that it labels responsible methods of finding useful aid "guilty". Our past record may be bad, but I doubt whether it justifies this weighty a conclusion against trying responsibly to find better types of aid. Hardin himself sometimes speaks of the need for post-audits on our aid.[48] The idea of a post-audit allows for the responsible trial of new forms of aid, which is exactly what Singer suggests is needed, and it also allows for the possibility of our learning from our past record the proper kinds of aid to give.

We have now noted three of the faults of Hardin's policy of regarding aid as intervention, or alternatively, as guilty until proven innocent: (1) the policy is faulty in principle in virtue of its labelling as "guilty" responsible means of proving the innocence of aid; (2) it is not capable of the work Hardin expects of it since it allows for more aid than is consistent with his position when coupled with his view that within-tribe aid is innocent; and (3) it is not supported by good inductive evidence. The fourth fault we might note concerning this policy is that it is not in keeping with Hardin's own advice. Hardin's advice involves intervention--namely intervening in the lives of those who normally give, or who might receive, overseas aid--and since this

intervention is ultimately to help foreign countries remain within their carrying capacities and to help future generations to a higher quality of life, perhaps his own advice should be regarded as guilty until proven innocent. But the "proof" of the innocence of his adivce is necessarily only available in the future (using "proof" in the hard empirical sense which Hardin needs if the principle is to count against Singer's advice). Hardin's programme is definitely experimental in our times, with our societies and on so great a scale. Hardin's programme might be broad experimentation in the sense that it involves most of the people on this planet, but it is not broad in its search for new forms of aid nor in the variety of aids it would test. More importantly, his proposed experiment does not seem to proceed completely responsibly.

Hardin's experiment, unlike responsible experiments with aid, does not even purport to attempt to keep to a minimum the morally blameworthy actions it could involve. The programme is concerned for some sources of moral value; it is concerned to preserve the perfectionist goals and achievements of our society, the individual projects and undertakings of the affluent, and the utility of our actions for future generations. Hardin's advice gives little or no evidence for concern for contractual obligations, the rights of individuals (present or future), the individual projects and undertakings of the poor, nor the utility of his experiments for the present generation. Most of the present generation could be sacrificed for his grand experiment of aid to future generations. A more responsible programme of aid experimentation would either seek a much stronger generation with a far greater degree of widespread self-reliance on which to begin the experiment so that the sacrifices could be kept to minimum, or it would supplement Hardin's experiments with many other aid experiments which involve less moral risk, limiting Hardin's experiment of "no-aid" aid to the strongest needy groups. This may be triage but it is used much more responsibly. If responsible experimentation is triage, then it is difficult to see what the scarcity is other than the scarcity of groups upon which Hardin's experiment could be responsibly practiced. Good moral grounds for regarding Hardin's

advice as guilty until proven innocent are present even though other sources of moral value may support or partially support his advice. Certainly the possibility of an alternative responsible programme of experimentation would win the support of greater numbers of the sources of moral value including some which also support Hardin's advice. So the principle that all aid should be regarded as guilty until proven innocent is not in keeping with Hardin's own advice, because his own plan for aid might well be regarded as guilty, and in any case, the proof of its innocence is weak.

Consider now more briefly another of Hardin's principles. Hardin was concerned about the unlikelihood of net benefit resulting from programmes like Singer's because of the principle that we can never do only one thing (e.g. only increase the chances of the demographic transition occurring sooner). But this principle counts equally against any proposal for action or inaction including Hardin's. We simply do not know all the side effects of removing aid completely, or of limiting aid to within-the-tribe aid, or of limiting aid to a strict triage, in our present world situation. The fact that we lack this knowledge also suggests the need for a broader programme of aid experimentation.

A further factor which Hardin has used to make his advice seem more probable to produce net benefit over Singer's (but one which we have not considered in our defense of Hardin) is the absence of a world government which accepts the responsibility and has the power to control population growth. It is the absence of this unity of government which, Hardin argues, creates the commons situation for international food aid (a claim deserving of further investigative criticism than we can here provide). Even so, the absence of a world government is not completely advantageous to Hardin's programme for action. The United States is not the only country which Hardin must stop from sending aid overseas if he is to implement his programme. Even within the United States he will have to lobby for legislation since so important a matter as a possible planet-wide population crash could not be left to individuals for voluntary restraint on their giving habits. As Hardin has said, "it takes only one...to ruin a system of voluntary restraint". Moreover, Hardin

knows that it is in the interest of some to promote continued giving.[49] Hardin must gain the services of a world governing body if he expects to have his triage plans followed explicitly. The fact that a number of developed nations give a much greater proportion of their Gross National Product to foreign aid than the United States is relevant here.[50] Thus, the absence of a world government hurts the probability of benefit resulting from Hardin's advice as well as Singer's, and it does not seem to decide which is most likely to produce a net benefit. If Singer's plans for population control through proper aid are hurt by the lack of a single world government, then so are Hardin's plans for charity control.

In our defence of Hardin we noticed that Hardin could support his position (and thus the probability of its benefit) by his unique concept of carrying capacity which, we also noted then, does not require numerical accuracy for its use. Even so, we must question the applicability of this concept in the human realm. Hardin admits that "carrying capacity" will apply to our species differently than it does to others, but perhaps the difference is greater than he may have thought. In the animal world signs of malnutrition and degradation of the environment do suggest an exceeding of the carrying capacity has occurred, but in the human realm other causes also exist for these effects: stupidity and distributive injustice. Before we conclude that the carrying capacity of an area has been exceeded we will have to rule out the possibility of the sign's having some other cause. Hardin seems to have defined his concept of carrying capacity so loosely that sending aid and demanding justice are <u>never</u> appropriate responses to famine (or malnutrition) and certain forms of land deterioration. To this extent Hardin begs the question as to whether aid should be sent for world hunger. Carrying capacity and the exceeding of it, will have to be defined much more carefully if Hardin wishes his analysis of the world hunger situation to compete for credibility with Singer's.

Another way to show the lesser probability of Hardin's advice resulting in net benefit over Singer's is to reconsider the value of the end results of that advice. Hardin predicts that his advice will have

better long term results than the advice of those supportive of aid. We have already suggested that his advice might run contrary to, and thus not be considered valuable in terms of, some of the sources of moral value. Hardin's advice cannot be valued for its commitment to honouring: contractual obligations; the rights of individuals (present or future); the individual projects and undertakings of the poor; or the utility of his experiment for the present generation. I believe that Hardin would claim that the remaining sources of moral value give value to the results of his advice to the extent that his advice will be valued by the affluent as having net benefit over Singer's. We might proceed in our critique now by reconsidering whether Hardin's advice really gains value from the sources he claims to be concerned for.

Consider first the claim that Hardin is concerned for the individual (private) projects and undertakings of the affluent. He is not so concerned for these projects as he at first appears. He is opposed to most projects undertaken by the affluent to provide charity to the overseas hungry. He seems to advise against most altruistic projects that are not limited to within small tribes. He does not support any undertakings that may jeopardize future personal undertakings by the affluent. The main type of personal projects he does support for the affluent is the project of ensuring descendents for oneself into the future. Obviously then, his project is only partially supported by this source of value, for many of the affluent will value projects other than ensuring for themselves descendents (and some value these other projects more highly). Hardin's advice limits personal projects and thus will have limited value from this source. He suggests that posterity will not be pleased with the results of following Singer's advice, but will they be pleased with the results of his own advice? What kind of personal projects will be possible in the survival achieved by Hardin's programme? The legacy of his programme would seem to be a world of self-interest where morality is practiced (and allowed to be practiced) only when convenient to one's own, or one's group's or nation's, advantage. This result severely limits the important projects which attempt to increase coopera-

tion among tribes and nations. Furthermore, in a less stable, more tense world order (recall the greater dangers of war and terrorism), there will be a greater need for cooperation and projects having value beyond one's own group: The more energy placed in protecting one's group or nation, the less for personal projects.

Secondly, reconsider Hardin's claim to be concerned for the perfectionist goals and achievements of our society. He is particularly worried that a planet wide population crash could destroy civilization as we know it. But by postulating an antagonism among tribes Hardin's advice could well have the same effect. This antagonism which Hardin supports simply does not recognize the interdependence of peoples. The tribe of ecologists is somewhat dependent in their work on the tribe of mathematicians, some of the best mathematicians live in areas of absolute poverty (e.g. India) and there are many other interconnections between tribes. The between-tribe antagonism which Hardin claims is necessary for within-the-tribe altruism will not produce a world much better than Hobbes' state of nature. According to Hobbes a state of nature is a state of war where everyone is an enemy. If Hardin's tribes are, or become, as intractable as Hobbesian men then they might destroy one another, given the non-cooperation among mutually dependent groups and the less stable world order, coupled with the added danger of nuclear terrorism. Such a world order could be as harmful to perfectionist values as a population crash. But even if Hardin's tribes are not quite so intractable, many less personal projects will be possible in the world order resulting from his advice and correspondingly fewer perfectionist goals will be achieved without an increase in cooperation. If the cooperation between space scientists and electronics experts stagnated even at its present high level, we would find that both groups would progress much slower in the future. Hardin might respond that cooperation could be bought by those tribes which need and can afford it, but how will the payments be made among tribes where there is so little trust? If tribes become more antagonistic to each other's survival there will be greater distrust and less willingness to increase cooperation. In such an en-

vironment where would the cooperation develop needed to find payment mechanisms which are safe for the tribes still wishing to interact? Hardin's advice seems to "lock" us in to the present levels of cooperation; perfectionist goals such as scientific research cannot but be hurt by this result, since these goals continue to require increasingly complex forms of cooperation.

The last and most important of the claims to value available to Hardin's advice is its concern for the utility of our actions for future generations. In our limiting of the value Hardin's advice receives from the other claimed sources of value we have already somewhat limited its value to these future generations. This advice is hurt by the restrictions it places on personal projects and on perfectionist achievements. Furthermore, we have already suggested that the resultant world order might not be more stable than the world order resulting from pro-aid advice. Instability is of negative utility particularly if it leads to violence rather than a return to stability. Negative utility is of course an indication that a particular subject is of negative value in relation to the standards of utility. Hardin's advice is also of no or little value towards the development of respect for the rights of individuals, i.e. starving individuals' right to life, and it is of little utility to the poor even in the future, for while their populations may in the future remain within carrying capacities, death and suffering might remain the agent which keeps the population at the appropriate level. In the long run this continual occurrence of death and suffering would accummulate to astonishing levels. Utility, in seeking to maximize benefits over harms, cannot but be hurt in the long run by Hardin's advice that we accept continual suffering in absolute poverty countries rather than the threat of population crashes. The utility of Hardin's advice for all future generations cumulatively will not be as great (if indeed it has any utility for this "overall" group as a whole) as its utility for certain particular future generations--namely those lucky ones that either have escaped huge impending population crashes or have had their numbers so depleted by former famines that nations are within their carrying capacities.[51]

That Hardin's programme is not completely valuable in relation to its utility for future generations is further amplified when we consider some facts about human nature. First, differences between people are great, so that the loss incurred by sacrificing present individuals for the sake of future survival cannot be measured because within the absolute poverty groups which Hardin would sacrifice will be a number of great individuals with the potential to make great contributions which would benefit future generations.[52] Earlier we suggested that an order to compassion might be reasonable. If this order is to be of the most utility, one might expect that concern would be shown to those nearest us in time, as well as those nearest us in family, tribe, and location. One reason for expecting increased utility by doing good to those presently alive is that the effect of their loss cannot be completely and accurately computed in relation to its utility for future peoples. In the vast amounts of suffering and death allowed by Hardin's programme many potentially great individuals whose actions may have been useful to future generations will be sacrificed. Perhaps a more significant reason for expecting an order to aid giving priority to those nearer to us in time to have increased utility relative to the order to aid proposed by Hardin is that humans anticipate their futures and their deaths. One's experience of the present is affected by one's expectations of what the future might hold. A certain level of security and stability is required for both enjoyment of the present and for intelligent planning for the future. It is doubtful whether this required level of security could be maintained should we follow Hardin's advice, because the experience of noting that whole tribes are acceptably sacrificed by this experiment for the sake of future gains would leave few tribes feeling secure, much less the individuals within the tribes for whom Hardin's plans show even less concern. The negative utility of the resultant general "paranoia" would be compounded by the paranoid planning for the future which would occur under such a plan. Thirdly, human beings are emotionally interdependent in addition to their other interdependencies and so death among their fellow man is a source of suffering to them. Just as nearness in

family, tribe or location can heighten the emotional suffering which follows death, we would also expect that nearness in time would also heighten the resultant suffering. Hardin's plan seems calculated to allow for continued suffering and starvation. This might harden the emotions of some (also a lamentable loss), but some will feel acutely this emphathetic suffering. Recall again that present day tribes are such that those of both affluent and absolute poverty areas may be members of the same tribe. These factors about our human nature also lessen the utility of Hardin's plan.

Furthermore, one is tempted to wonder at Hardin's concern to provide utility to future generations. The possibility that there might not be very many future generations is an infinitely greater possibility--whether we follow Hardin's advice or some better advice--than the possibility that there is no present generation. This is but simply to remind us that utility over the long run should include utility for the present, and that more immediate (time-wise) "objects" are more likely to benefit from utilitarian actions.

Thus, there are several ways by which we might question the net value of Hardin's advice. It has some moral value, but the extent of that value is quite limited.[53] But notice also that the interpretation which sees Hardin as entirely unconcerned about morality, being concerned wholly for survival, might find these comments useful as questioning the value of Hardin's advice. It is legitimate to appeal to the value of one's survival, but we have noted that Hardin's advice might well have some "side-effects" leading to significant levels of instability within the world order: This instability would be a threat to survival and thus not very valuable in relation to survival.

One of the methods used by Hardin to make his advice appear more valuable is to compare it to some contrary advice which by being extreme is also of limited moral value (at least if moral value is to include the five sources we have been considering). Even so, it is not clear that Hardin has been completely fair in his derogatory remarks towards the extreme position. Lamentably, he does not even define what he means

by "pure morality". Hardin may have in mind the view that moral sources of value always take precedence over other sources, or he may mean the view that some (usually non-consequentialist) source of moral value should always take precedence over all other sources of value. A more moderate candidate is the view that in all moral dilemmas there is one (or some) source(s) of moral value which takes precedence. The most extreme versions of this "pure morality" may be "straw man" positions in that very few thoughtful people will maintain them. In any case, all three versions here considered promote what might be considered moral courage or moral heroism. The moral hero is the one who is willing to make great sacrifice to remain moral; this takes courage. Hardin does not seem to allow for the continuation of moral heroism in lifeboat situations. I believe this result to be based on an underestimation of the morally extreme position. Hardin underestimates the value people are able to place on these more extreme positions, and he also underestimates the position's ability to retain value in the face of dire consequences. (Most of these "pure moralities" do not correspondingly underestimate the presence of positions like Hardin's.)

The value people are able to place in these extreme positions might be seen in people who could not wish for their descendents survival in an immoral world. These people would choose having no descendents to be more valuable than having descendents in a world of great suffering and moral evil. Again, this is not to say that the descendents would be in any sense better off if they were not to exist, but that the progenitor would evaluate himself as better off or less morally blameworthy for not bringing offspring into such a world. These would be the people willing to give up their places in the lifeboat for others. Recall that Socrates could not bear the thought of survival at the cost of living in Thessaly.[54] Furthermore, Hardin is wrong in thinking that such tragedies undertaken for the sake of morality will be selected against. Moral heroes become moral examples, and those who give up the most seem to have the greatest effect on the continuation of morality--e.g., Jesus Christ. Hardin seems to underestimate the ability of even "pure morality" to

perpetuate itself in the face of physical opposition, and to offer value to those who choose it over survival. The choices for morality over survival ensures the continuation of morality through learned example. Hardin, of course, would find this line of reasoning biologically ridiculous.

Lastly, the net value of following Hardin's advice may also be questioned by showing good cause to doubt the need for triage. This procedure might also count against Singer's form of triage, but Singer's principle allows for triage only when it results in net benefit, which is what I intend to cast doubt on. The point is that other means (besides triage) exist for making it to be in a group's interest to cooperate with aid programs. Even if Hardin is correct that some punishment is required to teach poor nations to remain within their carrying capacities, the punishment might be more effectively directed at the governments and power elite (generally also among the affluent) rather than directing the punishment at the hungry masses for whom these governments do not seem to care in any case. Nor are we locked into this extreme position of <u>having</u> to punish, which could imply war when directed at governments and power elites. We are not limited to having to use punishment because people are complex enough that they may be motivated by other forces as well as by punishment. Some of these forms of motivation may be somewhat risky or expensive, but difficulty is not an excuse unless its magnitude reaches comparable moral significance to the suffering prevented. Furthermore, most governments which refuse to cooperate will have areas of vulnerability because of their "absolute poverty economier" so that either we will find forms of motivation which are not too costly or ways of getting around the non-cooperativeness which are, again, not too costly.

In concluding this critique of Hardin, then, notice that we have proceeded throughout the critique by questioning whether Hardin's advice is indeed more probable to produce net value or benefit over Singer's. We have undertaken this task, first by questioning some of the principles and factors which Hardin was using to work probability in his favour,

and secondly by showing how limited the sources of value supporting Hardin's advice are. We are now able to claim that Singer's proposed course of action is more likely to produce a net resulting benefit over Hardin's. Does this mean that we are therefore obligated to follow Singer's advice? This is a question which we must now leave to the next section, but we may note that one might be more rational, if not more moral, to take advantage of the probability which we have found to be in Singer's favour. At the very least following Singer's advice may be seen as praiseworthy relative to following Hardin's. Notice also that while our conclusion of this critique favours Singer's advice over Hardin's, we have not always agreed with Singer's arguments. So we might well begin our next section by again looking at these arguments. Finally, since Hardin's advice does not have net probable value relative to possible pro-aid advice positions, it can not be obligatory A that we not aid the absolute poverty countries, and any obligations B to not aid will be considerably weaker than any obligations B to find by responsible means, and to give, the proper aid. This conclusion is contrary to Hardin's purposes.

FOOTNOTES FOR SECTION TWO

1. P. Singer, Practical Ethics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.178.

2. P. Singer, Practical Ethics, p.174.

3. P. Singer does not name his groups, I have provided names simply for ease of reference.

4. P. Singer, Practical Ethics, p.170.

5. P. Singer, Practical Ethics, p.178.

6. If Singer means the reduction of poverty from its present level then the two expressions are not equivalent because enough aid might be sent to slow the growth of absolute poverty so some absolute poverty will have been prevented (without the sacrifice of anything of comparable moral significance) but far from being reduced from the present level poverty would still be growing, albeit slower than before. Thus the one expression may be true--some absolute poverty will have been prevented--while the other expression is false--poverty will not have been reduced from the present levels in the long run. Since one can be true and the other false in regard to the same application they are not equivalent. We may even doubt whether on this interpretation the third promise is false in most cases where there is no prospect of reducing poverty in the long run.

7. P. Singer includes the refusal of land reform as qualifying a country to be included in group (i), see Practical Ethics, p.179. In many Latin American countries, while land reform is nominally supported it is still actually refused; see Paul Harrison, Inside the Third World (Markham: Penguin, 1979), chapter 6, especially p.117. A number of these countries are not beyond our ability to assist in the prevention of some absolute poverty.

8. P. Singer, Practical Ethics, p.178.

9. Admittedly this involves the assumption that numbers do count, which is in agreement with Hardin's position--see G. Hardin,

Promethean Ethics (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980), pp.67-70--but is an assumption we must question later. As a Utilitarian Singer does not seem to be free to question this assumption especially at this point where he wants to oppose Hardin on consequentialist grounds; see P. Singer, Practical Ethics, pp.176-177 especially p.177 where Singer admits that Hardin's predictions are a greater evil.

10. At least in this case, i.e. cases of world hunger and absolute poverty involving nations of group (i).

11. There is some doubt as to whether these countries even belong in group (i) because group (i) consists of those countries which refuse to take steps to make aid effective when such "steps" are needed and in these cases there is good evidence that such "steps" are not needed. I take it that 'needed' indicates that without the "steps" comparable or greater sacrifice will ensue. But in this case, whether comparable or greater sacrifice will ensure is precisely what we are unsure of. We may say that the country was not in group (i) since its cooperation was not needed--it might have taken the steps when they were needed. On the other hand if comparable or greater sacrifice ensues then the country is in group (i) sure enough, but we are not obligated to aid it.

12. That is if we do not we change our foreign policies in other ways which might provide incentives, e.g. military coercion, and at present such changes are not at all likely, and might actually be regarded by some as comparable moral sacrifices.

13. The other way by which Singer achieves this limitation is of course, his basic argument for our obligation to send aid. This basic argument removes that group of countries which would be able to deal (sooner or later) with their problems of absolute poverty even without our help from the list of those not eligible for aid from the affluent; as we noted earlier Singer's triage has only two groups not three.

14. Of course, Hardin does not actually make this response but it is a reply available to him or one taking his position.

15. The latter interpretation allows for this result as well. The obligations I have in mind in this paragraph are those of the affluent towards the situation of world hunger.

16. For a discussion of the role of moral risk in moral assessments see T. Nagel, "Moral Luck", in Mortal Questions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp.24-36, especially pp.30-31.

17. Ruth Barcan Marcus, "Moral Dilemmas and Consistency", in The Journal of Philosophy, LXXVII, No.3 (March 1980), pp.121-136, especially p.126. Notice also that this possibility of ranking obligations B raises questions as to the role of practical reason in moral dilemmas. In particular, one might wonder whether practical reason might be allowed a role in the ranking of obligations B, and if so what might the difference be between its role in ranking and its role in deciding between equally ranked obligations B? I believe that practical reason might be allowed some role in ranking obligations B, but that this role is much more limited than its role in choosing between equally ranked obligations. It is a lower level of involvement for practical reason to rank obligations than it is for it to decide between obligations which have been ranked equally. In the deciding by practical reason to rank obligations in a certain order moral considerations will play a more significant role, but the reason for appealing to practical reason in cases where obligations B are equal and conflicting was that moral considerations alone will not decide the issue.

18. P. Singer, Practical Ethics, p.177. Notice that in his consideration of probability Singer draws our attention away from consideration of the long-term results of his advice versus the long-term results of Hardin's advice to a consideration of the short-term results of his advice versus the long-term results of Hardin's. He achieves this redirection of our consideration by emphasizing the certainty of the suffering which will occur in the near future.

19. Even R.S. McNamara is concerned about the time element. See "Population and International Security", in International Security (Fall, 1977), and also in The Theory and Practice of International Relations, ed. F.A. Sondermann, et.al., 5th ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1979), pp.249-262.

20. G. Hardin, The Limits of Altruism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), p.99; see also G. Hardin, Exploring New Ethics for Survival (New York: Viking, 1972), Chapter 5.

21. G. Hardin suggests that home-grown population control will be the best, The Limits of Altruism, p.68. Hardin wants us to aid population control: We might start by not condemning local methods and we might even allow rewards to those who are successful.

22. G. Hardin, The Limits of Altruism, pp.65-67 and 71-74, e.g. India which got aid is worse off than China which did not; Zambezi River Dam, Canete Valley destruction by pesticides; and the High Aswan Dam. See also G. Hardin, "Heeding the

Ancient Wisdom of Primum Non Nocere", in The Morality of Scarcity, eds. W.M. Finnin Jr., & G.A. Smith (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1979), pp.25-35.

23. G. Hardin, Promethean Ethics, p.8, where he is referring to intervention towards the environment, but that he feels the same way concerning intervention in international affairs can be seen in The Limits of Altruism, p.67: "The effects of intervention must never be assumed: they remain to be proved."

24. G. Hardin, The Limits of Altruism, p.48.

25. P. Singer, "Survival and Self-Interest: Hardin's Case Against Altruism", in the Hastings Center Report (February, 1978), pp.37-39.

26. G. Hardin, The Limits of Altruism, p.7. Whether people think they are acting out of self-interest or not is not important.

27. G. Hardin, The Limits of Altruism, pp.18-20.

28. Another reviewer who is baffled as to what the relevant principles which motivate our concern for the future might be according to Hardin is Daniel Lehocky; his review of The Limits of Altruism, is found in Environmental Ethics, vol.1, no.1 (Spring 1979), pp.83-88. His review seems largely based on Singer's.

29. P. Singer, Practical Ethics, p.175.

30. For example, R.J. Sider, Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977), pp.53-54.

31. G. Hardin, The Limits of Altruism, pp.63 and 91.

32. For example see N. Eberstadt, "Myths of the Food Crisis", in The New York Review of Books (February 19th, 1976), pp.32-37.

33. R.J. Sider, p.53, cf. P. Singer, "Survival and Self-Interest: Hardin's Case Against Altruism", in the Hastings Center Report, p.39. Notice that even luxury liners are sinkable; see John King-Farlow, Self-Knowledge and Social Relations: Groundwork of Universal Community (New York: Science History Publications, 1978), p.263.

34. J.W. Howe and J.W. Sewell, "Let's Sink the Lifeboat Ethics", in Worldview, Col.18, No.10 (October 1975), pp.13-18, also in The Theory and Practice of International Relations, ed. F.A. Sondermann, et. al., 5th ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1979) especially p.265.

35. P. Singer, "Survival and Self-Interest: Hardin's Case Against Altruism", p.38, and Practical Ethics, p.175.

36. G. Hardin, The Limits of Altruism, pp.52-53.

37. G. Hardin, The Limits of Altruism, p.58.

38. This criticism is made by R.J. Sider, Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger, p.55. The suggestion was made earlier by R. Heilbroner in An Inquiry into the Human Prospect (New York: Norton, 1974). See also J.W. Howe and J.W. Sewell, "Let's Sink the Lifeboat Ethics".

39. As evidenced by the widespread need for land reform see N. Eberstadt, "Myths of the Food Crisis" and P. Harrison, Inside the Third World.

40. G. Hardin, The Limits of Altruism, p.93, and Promethean Ethics, p.60.

41. See R.A. Watson, "Reason and Morality in a World of Limited Food", in World Hunger and Moral Obligation, eds. W. Aiken and H. La Follette (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977), pp.115-123.

42. P. Singer, Practical Ethics, p.179.

43. G. Hardin, The Limits of Altruism, p.48.

44. G. Hardin, The Limits of Altruism, pp.111-112.

45. G. Hardin, The Limits of Altruism, pp.132-133.

46. A commons, recall, is a group owned resource from which individuals, in this case individual tribes, within the group are free to determine the extent of their benefits. Hardin believes that the system of the commons leads to tragedy when the group demands or needs exceed the resource's carrying capacity.

47. G. Hardin, The Limits of Altruism, pp.134-135.

48. G. Hardin, "Living on a Lifeboat", pp.565-566.

49. G. Hardin, "Living on a Lifeboat", pp.562-563.

50. P. Singer, Practical Ethics, pp.161-162.

51. This claim will not be true for that view of utility which claims

that all human life has utility (maximization of benefit over harm) even for the most miserable, and thus that one way by which to maximize benefits over harms would be to maximize the human population size. Such a view is completely unfavourable towards Hardin's position.

52. J.B. Cobb, Jr., review of Animal Rights: A Christian Assessment of Man's Treatment of Animals, by Andrew Linzey, in Environmental Ethics, vol.2, no.1 (Spring 1980), pp.91-92. These facts about human nature are listed by Cobb in this review.

53. There may be other sources of moral value beyond those we have discussed. But it is not clear that Hardin's advice could receive significant amounts of value from these other sources. A particularly important example of another source of moral value has been suggested by R. Barcan Marcus in "Moral Dilemmas and Consistency". She suggests that action taken to avoid moral dilemmas has moral value. Hardin's advice could be seen as perpetuating a moral dilemma by attempting to ignore it. So long as there is world hunger on this planet we will face the moral dilemmas it poses. Hardin's advice is to allow continued world hunger, and so continued moral dilemma. Hardin takes a strong stand against all who wish to generate moral conflict, in The Limits of Altruism, pp.17-18. One wonders how he can then not condemn plans which perpetuate moral conflicts. (Perhaps he believes that this is the best we can achieve?)

54. Plato, The Last Days of Socrates, trans. H. Tredennick (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), pp.94-95.

SECTION THREE

SINGER FAILS TO DEMONSTRATE MORAL OBLIGATION

The previous sections of this work have for the most part compared the positions of Hardin and Singer on the issue of morality and world hunger. Naturally a number of issues which complicate this initial comparison have not been addressed. My intention in this section is to consider some of these concerns. The discussion of these complications will center around one of the more important questions residual to our discussion at this point: Should the numbers of individuals involved be allowed significance in moral considerations? To show that this question is indeed residual I shall introduce it via a discussion of Singer's basic principle: "[i]f we can prevent something bad without sacrificing anything of comparable moral significance, we ought to do it". Second, a discussion of the problem concerning whether the numbers of individuals involved should be given moral weight will show that Singer fails to demonstrate the moral obligation to prevent absolute poverty--at least not the obligations he has in mind. Finally this section will include a short investigation as to why this criticism of Singer does not renew the acceptability of Hardin's advice.

A. Singer's Principle

We have made considerable use of this principle in our reasoning to this point, but we have not stopped to consider Singer's claim that most are likely to accept this principle.[1] Furthermore, even if this claim is correct, is this principle useful in providing for moral obligations? Consider the following possible application of Singer's principle to the issue of smoking cigarettes in public places. The first

premise is Singer's principle. "If we can prevent something bad without sacrificing anything of comparable [moral] significance, we ought to do it." Research has indicated that the effects of secondhand smoke may be worse than those of firsthand smoke.[2] (Most admit that the effects of firsthand smoke on health are bad.) So, the second premise, subjecting any non-smoker (or at least those who do not generally of their own will expose themselves to situations resulting in such effects on health) to secondhand smoke in public is bad. The third premise is that some exposure of non-smokers to secondhand smoke can be prevented without the sacrifice of anything of comparable moral significance (i.e. comparable to immediate discomforts, future suffering from various diseases and ultimately a shorter life). Therefore, the conclusion that we ought to prevent some of the exposure of non-smokers to secondhand smoke. One of the easiest ways to fulfill this obligation would be to not smoke in public.[3]

How may the smoker argue against this conclusion? He might note that when he disciplines himself to not smoke in public he will in fact experience comparable discomforts, future suffering from various diseases and ultimately a shorter life. Even so, the "future suffering" and "shorter life" are more likely the result of his smoking than of his limiting his smoking. Thus they are not evils he undergoes as a sacrifice for the prevention of the bad secondhand smoke. Still the smoker may indeed argue that the discomforts he must suffer, in virtue of not having a cigarette when he needs one, are of comparable moral significance to the effects of his action on non-smokers. The one who indulges in the habit of smoking may argue thus because Singer has not defined the phrase "comparable moral significance".[4] His reason for not defining this phrase is that he desires that his principle should be acceptable to as many people as possible. His principle and its applications are to appeal to utilitarians and non-utilitarians alike. Even so, in gaining this breadth of appeal for his principle he seems to have lost some of its utility. Because the notion of comparable moral significance does not rest on any specific set of values, everyone may accept the principle

but not everyone need accept conclusions based on the principle since they may always claim some view such that in any particular case--e.g. smoking in public--the sacrifice is of sufficient moral significance to be comparable to any bad to be prevented via the suffering of the sacrifice. In other words one may deny in any particular case the truth of the third premise by denying that the condition "without the sacrifice of anything of comparable moral significance" can be met.

Singer suggests three responses to this possible weakness: his principle's lack of usefulness. First, wherever degrees of sacrifice are possible one would expect that on most any view of moral significance as the degree of sacrifice grows smaller at some point a threshold would be admitted such that degrees of sacrifice below the threshold would not be considered of comparible moral significance.[5] In our example, the giving up of one cigarette smoked in a public place per day, might be considered by many to be a small enough degree of sacrifice such that it would be considered of comparable moral significance to the adverse effects of the secondhand smoke on the health of those not normally willing to expose themselves to such effects. A problem here is that generally when less is sacrificed less bad is prevented so that the sacrifice and the bad prevented may remain comparable in moral significance. A further problem here is the question of how one might speak of degrees of sacrifice without some account of "comparable moral significance". (Nor is it immediately clear that the "sacrifice" of being able to prevent future population crashes will admit of degrees.)

Singer's second response is that <u>most</u> of those whom we wish to convince that they are obligated to make some degree of sacrifice, will not claim that the sacrifice is of comparable moral significance. That is, in our present case, most habitual smokers will not deny the truth of the third premise, especially if the sacrifice admits of degrees as supposedly the number of cigarettes smoked in public places per day would. There may of course be some die-hards who will insist that the question does not admit of degrees. Such a person might appeal to some unique version of property rights. Non-smokers do not own any air in

public places and so do not have any right to any special quality of air in those places while smokers do own cigarettes and thus may dispose of them as they please so long as they do not violate someone else's property rights. On such a view it may be difficult to see why the smoker should make any sacrifice no matter how small the degree, especially since non-smokers will not reciprocate by sacrificing some of their property rights in return. (Again, it is not completely obvious what moral significance most people would place on absolute poverty relative to their other moral values; this is so especially since the average person need not take up the moral view that an impartial observer would. These considerations of what the most people will think, or what the moral view of the average person is, are made in response to Singer's claim about what the most people will believe about moral significance in the world hunger situation. Of course, the beliefs of most people need not correspond to philosophic truths, and appeals to popular conceptions cannot determine moral correctness. Perhaps Singer is concerned here with a programme of influencing action rather than of philosophizing. Even so, he seems to have assumed that the viewpoint of the impartial observer is the only moral viewpoint available, or at least his having made such an assumption would explain why he believes most people agree with him.)

Singer's third response, to this charge of weakness for arguments based on his basic principle, is that at least on any defensible view of what is "morally significant", arguments based on his principle will be useful in providing obligations. One worries here that he might mean by a "defensible view" any view which is in agreement with his own intuitions (in which case he may well have begged the question against Hardin). But assuming that he wishes to have his principle acceptable to as many moral views as possible we will not interpret his meaning of "defensible" to be simple agreement with his intuitions. I also take it that he does not mean to imply that property rights are morally wholly insignificant and indefensible, but rather that they are relatively insignificant. Thus, defensible views of moral significance, according to Singer, would place the moral significance of some property rights

below the moral significance of the prevention of some needless death. Notice that such an ordering might not be sufficient to save the argument against smoking in public places. To save the argument one must argue either that in general exposure to some probability of a shorter life-span is in fact needless death or that some property rights are of less moral significance than the health of the general public. There may be good arguments supportive of either of these directions. Nevertheless, an important question remains: What conditions does Singer require by requiring a view of moral significance to be defensible? A "defensible" view, I suspect, is one which is able to reply to some "attacks" including some of the more significant objections launched against it. It is not clear to me at this point whether the smoker appealing to the moral significance of property rights has a view which meets this condition or not. And while the issue of smoking in public is important and of interest, it has done the work we need from it; it has shown us primarily that the usefulness of Singer's basic principle is somewhat dependent on the defensibility of the positions which those who resist its application hold concerning moral significance. (Hardin's position has been defended to some extent in this thesis; Singer has not established its indefensibility.)

Now if Singer's basic principle happens not to be useful to the argument against smoking in public, then we should not for this reason alone suspect Singer's principle of having no utility in other issues. The smoking issue may be exceptional in some way, or perhaps it is lacking in magnitude, or perhaps the best result for society is that smokers not be obligated to restrict their habit in public. On the other hand, if Singer's principle suffers similar criticism concerning the issue at hand--the prevention of absolute poverty--then Singer's position towards this issue is considerably weakened. Does Singer's argument for an obligation to assist in the world hunger situation meet criticisms similar to those met by the parallel argument for an obligation to minimize the effects of secondhand smoke? Might one plausibly argue that by giving any amount of goods or money our sacrifice would indeed be of comparable

moral significance to the amount of absolute poverty prevented in some foreign land? We will be wise to consider how such an argument might proceed.

Since the argument will concern the moral significance of sacrifices as compared to the moral significance of the prevention of some amount of absolute poverty, a survey of some of the sacrifices that have been considered will be in order. Singer has considered a number of these sacrifices. He seems to consider the sacrifice of luxuries, material possessions, private education, and many property rights not to be of comparable moral significance to the absolute poverty which might be prevented through the making of such sacrifices. Notice that in considering these things not to be of comparable moral significance Singer is assuming the viewpoint of a judge or an impartial observer rather than that of an actor. An actor might take the view that moral significance is to some extent a matter of not violating the rights of a person, himself being one. From his point of view the actor feels that he is protected by his rights against the loss of his personal material possessions which he has worked to obtain. These possessions may be very important to an actor; he may even tend to identify himself with his belongings. The average working man in affluent countries generally does not have many personal projects (one of the sources of moral value) that do not involve what Singer would consider to be excessive personal possessions. This is not to claim that "rights" is all there is to ethics, but only that they <u>are</u> a source of moral value and perhaps more so than Singer has given credit for; not everyone can be expected to attempt to be impartial observers in their moral outlook. Those who are uneasy about strong uses of rights theories should note a further limitation (beyond the claim that "rights" is not all there is to ethics) in the present use of rights theory: Rights are here used primarily in a defensive role rather than offensive. I believe that the defensive role creates less tendency towards individualism than the offensive role especially when the defensive role is combined with an order to compassion favouring those who are nearer first. The defensive role should be largely comforting to actors. (It may, moreover, be better that people think of

themselves as actors rather than observers, since observers generally feel less responsibility for "their" acts--in this world even "neutral" observers act for if they do not, Singer is wasting his appeals.) The actor's point of view is a part of morality. Singer is willing to consider some of these "actor's points of view"--namely those placing greater importance on the protections and comforts afforded by personal rights--to be of less moral significance than the prevention of some absolute poverty, but in doing so he has alienated potential actors from his principle. On the other hand, he does consider the sacrifice of the privilege to take care of family and community first to be, to some minimal degree, of comparable importance. That is to say, by way of Singer's example, "[t]o allow one's own kin to sink into absolute poverty would be to sacrifice something of comparable significance".[6] The major portion of our discussion in the previous sections has been concerned with the importance of the sacrifice of future poverty, a sacrifice which makes up Hardin's main concern, and a sacrifice which to a certain degree Singer admits may be comparable to the moral significance of preventing present poverty. (The details of the extent to which Singer admits to such comparability have been already investigated.) John Arthur has hinted that the sacrifice of cultural and artistic values may be considered of comparable moral significance.[7] Now that we have surveyed the possible sacrifices considered by Singer and his opponents, we might ask whether there are important areas of sacrifice which have not been considered.

I believe that there is such an unconsidered area of sacrifice. Obviously, if I support the work of preventing absolute poverty in other lands to the point where giving more would result in something of comparable moral significance being sacrificed, then I would be unable--unable, because I may be obligated to prevent sacrifices of greater moral significance--to also support projects involved in preventing other evils. There indeed are such projects in competition for our support with the projects for the prevention of absolute poverty. Medical research, for example, has shown itself useful to the prevention of much

human suffering and death, and many areas of medical research are dependent on donations and volunteered time and effort for their continued work. Would Singer wish to admit that the sacrifice of the ability to give to other worthwhile projects is of comparable moral significance? If so, are we obligated to give equally to all or may we give as we please? Does the project's likelihood of success affect its moral significance? Do some projects deserve priority? Singer's basic principle seems to give us little advice in these trade-off situations.

Someone might object on Singer's behalf at this point by noting that Singer need not advocate that we give up any of our present donation and voluntary aid habits. He is rather primarily concerned for the amount of absolute poverty which could be prevented by the sacrifice of such things as new houses, new cars, stereos, colour televisions, expensive new clothing, et cetera. Giving up these things would not prevent us from fulfilling most of our usual charitable acts.

Even so, we must admit that people do give up many of these things in virtue of their usual level of charity. So the situation is not one where people are living up to a certain level of charity without any personal sacrifice. This point becomes significant when we realize that Singer does not wish to publicly advertise so high a standard of sacrifice as his argument provides obligation for. Those who accept his arguments will of course give more, but they need to advocate to the general public a standard of giving which will encourage the greatest amount of giving. The level of giving expected from the general public should not be so high as to be only within the reach of moral giants (heroes or saints). Such a level may discourage average people from giving anything. Singer suggests the level of ten percent of family income for families with average incomes. Does Singer expect families of average incomes to donate ten percent of their incomes over and above their present habits of charity? For many who do presently maintain habits of charity, this may be expecting too much. But in any case, regardless of what the level of giving is, or is advocated, Singer has not shown us any reason why any portion of an amount given should be allocated to the prevention of

absolute poverty rather than to the prevention of some other form of human suffering. If all my friends live in high-rises why should I not allocate my charity towards organizations for greater high-rise fire safety, and the burn treatment society? Certainly any such organizations are working towards the prevention of human misery and death. Furthermore, Singer admits that the systems of family and community responsibility (as opposed to systems of large impersonal bureaucracies) may require for their continued operation, that we be allowed some preference for family and community, in our calculations as to what is of comparable moral significance. Would this preference for family and community allow for example, one to give the entire portion of the aid he is willing to give to medical purposes to research into expensive and sophisticated research which will likely result in expensive techniques for the prevention of suffering from the rarer diseases? Such techniques <u>if successful</u> would benefit our well-to-do communities for perhaps generations before those absolute-poverty communities would receive any value from them. Singer's basic principle gives no reason why one might be obligated to at least give <u>some</u> of one's support of medical projects to the application of the simpler, less expensive cures already known but not yet applied in absolute-poverty communities.

Again, someone may object on Singer's behalf that perhaps his principle does address this issue in that the prevention of suffering and death for a <u>few</u> in virtue of sophisticated techniques would indeed involve the sacrifice of something of greater moral significance, namely the suffering and death of <u>many</u> in the absolute-poverty communities where less expensive medical methods could prevent a greater number of people from suffering and death. This is the question of whether the <u>number</u> of people involved in a variety of suffering should be calculated into the moral significance of preventing that suffering or sacrificing the prevention of that suffering. Singer seems to support the position that the number of people involved should be given moral significance.

B. Singer and the Numbers Question

Singer is not clear in his support of the position that the numbers of people involved should be given moral weight. As we have noted, he does allow for some preference for the interests of one's family and community. So one might think that family would take precedence over larger numbers of strangers. Even so, the cases he considers are ones where the bad prevented would be equal; a bowl of rice, for example, that would keep my child from starvation, would likely keep only one similar child from starvation in an absolute-poverty community. Furthermore one of Singer's reasons for the preference for family and community seems to be that he believes that such a priority ranking in responsibilities will be more efficient than say a large impersonal bureaucracy--more "efficient" likely means that the interests of a greater number are protected. The term "interests" is a key term for Singer in this issue. Equal interests would be considered by Singer to be of comparable moral significance. Interests in relief from equal degrees of suffering are equal interests for Singer. Interests in the satisfaction of equal needs are also equal. But for Singer these equal interests are cumulative. "True scales favour the side...where several interests combine to outweigh a smaller number of similar interests."[8]

Even so, why Singer comes to such a conclusion is not clear. At the very least we might note that his basic argument alone will not establish this conclusion. He claims that an interest is an interest no matter whose interest it may be. "[P]eople's need for food has nothing to do with their race...."[9] Well then, we may counter, neither does people's need for food have anything to do with the size of the group they happen to be part of. Starving people need food whether they are ten or ten thousand: each starving person's need for food is the same. We cannot discriminate against a person needing food simply because he happens to be a member of a small group. Similarly people's need for medical attention is not dependent on the size of the group or community they happen to be part of. Furthermore, a person's need for medical attention does not depend on the expense or sophistication of that attention; the

availability of that attention may depend on its expense and sophistication but the need for it does not. Finally, the need for the best medical attention available does not even depend on the probability of that medical procedure's success--the desire for such medical attention may be less but the need for it remains the same. In a trade-off situation, then, where it is possible to save only one of two groups from similar suffering or death, if one chooses to save the larger group because this meets the interests of a greater number, then one has discriminated against the interests of each in the smaller group simply because they happened to be members of a smaller group. The interests of any one person in the smaller group are of comparable moral significance to the interests of any one person in the larger group. So how does it happen that cumulatively the interests of the smaller group are not of comparable moral significance to the interests of the larger, given that the concept of moral significance has been left undefined? To assume that the moral significance of interests can be added into totals corresponding to the number of people having the interests is to partially define the concept of moral significance. Even from the universal point of view --the view of an impartial observer, and the view Singer favours--that group size should always affect the moral significance of interests is not obvious.

The universal point of view demands equal consideration for the equal interests of individuals. But there are two senses which might be given to the concept of equal consideration when applied to groups. The first sense is that equal consideration is given to each person's interests (i.e. to see if the interests are of the appropriate kind and degree) in calculating the size of his interest group--that group of the greatest number of people whose similar interest can all be satisfied. The second sense is that equal consideration is given to each person's interests in determining which interests (or needs) will be satisfied.

Someone might object that the second sense make no reference to groups. But in trade-off situations, where it is possible to save only one (some) of two (a number of) groups from similar suffering or death,

determining which interest(s) is (are) satisfied will determine that the rest of the members in the interest group will also have their interest satisfied. The second sense does not necessarily refer to the size of the group although the group's size may be used in the calculations of the probabilities. I have in mind the situation where each person is given an equal chance--initially for the sake of calculations--of having his interest satisfied; when the decision procedure selects an individual for this privilege then his entire interest group is also thereby selected, thus the larger group has a greater probability than the smaller group corresponding to their difference in size. For example, if out of two unequally sized groups together totalling six people one has the resources to satisfy only the interests of one group and the resource is indifferent as to which, then if the groups are sized one and five, then the single person "group" still has a one-sixth chance of having his interest satisfied.[10] This result is a significant improvement over the first sense of the concept of equal consideration which allows one to say that the single person "group" will be given equal consideration but has no chance of having his need met; such consideration would not be highly valued (morally or otherwise) by any smaller groups in trade-off situations.

Someone might object to my second sense by offering a third sense of equal consideration by which the concept of equal consideration means each individual has an equal chance at having his interest satisfied. Those holding to this third sense would argue that where two groups are involved as in our case, then if each person were to have equal chance then each member of the group of five would have a one-half chance and the member of the single person "group" would also have a one-half chance at having his need met. I would respond that the concept of consideration is generally distinguished from the concept of chance; so, to take the modified concepts "equal consideration" and "equal chance" to mean the same thing involves a special usage of these words and is "stretching" the usual concepts beyond their recognizable content.[11] So we return to our study of the original two senses of the concept of equal

consideration.

We have already considered one reason for favouring the second sense of the concept (equal consideration in determining which interests are satisfied) over the first sense (equal consideration in calculating the size of the interest groups); namely that the second sense is useful and valuable to more individuals since it will be valued by both those who are in larger groups and those who are in smaller groups. From a universal point of view, a decision mechanism which is valued by both of the groups to be decided between is better than the mechanism that only one group values. (Admittedly this point of view is not conclusive since some might regard their chance of being in a larger group to be chance enough for equal consideration, and especially since there is a greater chance of more people actually benefitting from the first sense of the concept of equal consideration.) Consider now a second reason for favouring the second sense of this concept over the first; this reason takes the form of a conflict of purposes for Singer concerning the first. If equal consideration is taken to mean equal consideration in calculating the size of the interest groups, always deciding in favour of the larger, then in some situations people will be, thereby, strongly motivated to increase their numbers. Singer needs a decrease in population growth for his advice to work; he will want to keep the motivation for growth to a minimum. It seems strange to think that we should be morally obligated to favour the Moslem interest in land in the Middle East simply because they are in greater number and reproducing faster than the Jews.[12] If morality simply favours the larger group then the way for a group to go about gaining moral favour would be to multiply; given the present dangers of overpopulation, moral theories which motivate growth more than need be will be considered dangerous by many. The second sense of the concept of equal consideration will provide less motivation to increase (although motivation to increase is still present), since smaller groups at least have some chance of receiving moral favour in trade-off situations. Our discussion of the moral significance of the interests of unequal sized groups in trade-off situations has to

this point concentrated on the possibility of support for this view being argued by those who favour the universal point of view as the view from which moral judgements should be made. The universal point of view is generally in accord with utility, a source of moral value. I have outlined the extent to which utility might favour a position which in considering smaller groups allows them some chance of receiving a favourable decision from moral considerations (and thus aid). The main objection, from the value of utility, to the more equal distribution of chance (making for fairness of opportunity) which we have considered is that the actual benefits may be less, so that in the long run not quite so many people will be benefitted as would be if group size were the overriding consideration in all trade-off situations. Now this objection might be replied to by pointing to the disutility of the stronger motivation to increase the size of one's interest group. We might now consider the relation of some of the other sources of moral value to the question of whether the larger interest group should always be aided in trade-off situations.

The source of moral value which claims that the rights we individually possess are not to be violated has been used to argue that the numbers should not count by John Taurek.[13] Taurek argues from one's right to prefer to aid oneself or one's friend regardless of the possibility of being able to aid several more people by not aiding oneself or one's friend to the conclusion that the larger group does not have a special moral claim obligating one to aid it. (Obligations are not usually so easily overridden by personal preference.) Notice also that this rights theory as a source of moral value is also universalizable--that is, each person may be given equal consideration in the determination of the rights possessed; everyone has the right to aid the group they prefer. We will consider a further defense of Taurek against his critics shortly.

Another source of moral value which does not always favour aiding the larger group is the value of perfectionist ends. Cancer research is very expensive and in a world where its successes have been small and few,

and where malnutrition is a cause of suffering to a far greater number of people (and appears that it will remain so both now and into the future), if we are simply obligated to aid the greater number we must forego cancer research. Similarly, concerning the benefits of other perfectionist ends: Great art and great music are of benefit to far fewer people than adequate nutrition is. Thus if the giving up of art represents equal suffering to an avid art lover as the suffering of malnutrition is to a dweller in absolute poverty (and how could we measure equality here to determine that the suffering is not comparable?), then the size of the groups involved would obligate us to give up art. Similarly, we must give up the more complicated theoretical mathematics since it will benefit relatively few people, and similarly the space programme. Ultimately, all benefits which are not the most popular should not be supported if the numbers are to always count; such a principle does not lead to great rare accomplishments but rather supports the sort of achievements which can be appreciated by the typical, average, masses. One hesitates to call such societies "great". Clearly if Singer will accept as defensible only those moral outlooks which always favour the larger group he has greatly limited the acceptability of his basic principle and basic argument. A summary of our discussion will prove helpful here before we continue.

In brief, we have been discussing Singer's basic principle and have been concerned with whether he may need to define more specifically what he means by "comparable moral significance". First, in the problem of public smoking, difficulties arose in that even with the conditions Singer does place on the concept of "comparable moral significance" it was not clear that someone might not produce a defensible view of moral significance such that Singer's principle would be useless in demonstrating obligation in the context of that issue. Second we considered the possible relations of Singer's basic principle to the question of whether the numbers should count and we noticed that Singer cannot "have it both ways": Either his principle becomes defined in such a way as excludes the moral value of some sources and thus many apparently defensible moral

views, or the size of the group will not always determine our obligation to help the larger group. We are now in a position to proceed to consider the effects of these considerations on the usefulness of Singer's principle when applied to world hunger. We have also introduced a possible sacrifice of comparable moral significance, i.e. the loss to organizations which compete with world hunger organizations for voluntary support, and we have complicated this possible sacrifice with what may be a defensible view of moral significance: The view that the numbers of individuals involved is not of moral significance. We have even considered how this view might find some defense on the basis of some of Singer's own reasoning. We now proceed.

Someone opposed to sending resources for relief of absolute poverty might accept Singer's basic principle but deny the obligation to help in this situation by maintaining that there is evil--suffering and death --to be prevented in our own lands by way of, for example, medical progress and that the fact that fewer people will benefit from voluntary aid in these areas is irrelevant since the view that the numbers are not morally significant may be defensible. Furthermore, Singer's second condition placed on the concept of "comparable moral significance"--that most people will not claim such a view of moral significance--may be of equally little use since the recent donations to the Terry Fox fund show that many consider even projects of benefit to comparatively few people and with so remote chances of success to be of moral significance. And certainly many within the various Christian churches would support the position that the numbers do not count. Nor will Singer's first condition limit our objection to obligation in the world hunger situation. Singer's first condition was that as the degree of sacrifice grows smaller there will be some threshold below which the sacrifice is no longer of comparable moral significance. But in this trade-off situation if we sacrifice less of our support of other competing worthy projects that would mean we would be preventing much less absolute poverty, so less sacrifice might still be comparably morally significant to this prevention of less absolute poverty. More accurately, most talk of "degrees of prevention of evil" and "degrees of sacrifice" is really, in this

context, talk of greater and lesser numbers of individuals to suffer similar degrees of evil or to have similar interests sacrificed. One's interest in not suffering a slow death by cancer would be comparable to one's interest to not suffer a slow death by starvation or malnutrition. Thus, if the numbers do not count, adding the possibility of degrees of sacrifice or of the prevention of some evil will not affect the moral significance of the sacrifice or of the prevention of the evil.

Now since making morality dependent on popularity is not generally desirable, and since the importance of the possibility of degrees of sacrifice to this argument seems somewhat dependent on the question as to whether the numbers should count, the main issue between Singer and anyone who may wish to argue against the obligations he supports by claiming that any sacrifices we may make in the areas of medical advances and safety advances are of comparable moral significance--the main issue between these opponents is whether the view that the numbers should not always count is a defensible view of what is morally significant. Now I have indicated how some defense for this view may be taken from Singer's own reasoning. Even so, I have also indicated that views may require more than "some defense" before we will call them defensible. John Taurek has argued for the view that the numbers should not count in his article "Should the Numbers Count?". Furthermore, Taurek's position has been the subject of attack.[14]

We are not able (due to the limitations of a project of this size) to undertake a complete study of Taurek and the various criticisms which have been launched against his position. Indeed such a complete study is not even fully desirable for our present purposes. To discover the level of defensibility of Taurek's view that the numbers should not always count is not completely desirable because there may be aspects of Taurek's arguments which may not be essential to the position and thus which we would not be concerned to defend. For example, G.S. Kavka believes that Taurek is arguing from libertarian presuppositions, but we need not wish to defend such presuppositions especially if they are not essential to the position. Notice also that the position

we need to defend for our present purposes will bear some refinement. Since we are arguing against Singer's position that we are obligated to help reduce absolute poverty we might make the following refinement: The view that the numbers should not always count in matters of moral obligation is a defensible view of what is morally significant. We do not need to argue that numbers are completely morally insignificant but only that they are not definitive in creating moral obligation. This slight refinement has been chosen because it is precisely the element which would allow Taurek to defend his position against much of Kavka's attack.

Kavka charges Taurek with having not shown that the numbers should not count in deliberations not concerned with determining one's moral obligations. Kavka sees Taurek's argument as presuming that all obligations are of the libertarian variety, in the sense that one is not obligated to help others unless one has wronged them or contracted (or quasi-contracted) to aid them. Now if Kavka is right concerning Taurek's presuppositions, then his position may require a little more refinement than ours. He would need to admit that he has shown only that the numbers should not count in matters of determining libertarian obligations. The question immediately arises as to whether we will be able to defend the view against Kavka's attack if we allow a broader range of obligations than is generally allowed by libertarians. I believe so. Kavka thinks that Taurek's argument works in virtue of the fact that Taurek sees no obligation (A or B) to aid either the larger or the smaller group facing similar tragedies. In such a situation our action is not determined morally by obligation, since there are none. But what of the situation where we are obligated B to aid both the larger and the smaller groups facing a similar tragedy? Some, of course, will not allow for obligations B, obligations to perform both of two mutually exclusive actions. Even so we might borrow from Singer's reasoning process once more and note that one's need for aid is not dependent on whether or not one's receiving aid is mutually exclusive to someone else's receiving similar aid. But since I am not fully satisfied with Singer's reasoning in this manner, I will add that the main reason for not allowing that there may

be obligations to perform both of two mutually exclusive actions may be that such a position aids in the evasion of some situations of moral anguish--moral anguish that results from a type of moral dilemma. Furthermore, it seems that there simply are such situations: situations wherein whatever choice one makes one will be morally culpable and will have to live with the responsibility for the choice made. I do not accept evasion of moral anguish as an acceptable basis on which to build theory of obligation. Moreover, the possibility of moral anguish will provide incentive to take actions to limit the number of moral dilemmas while the theory which views equal obligations in mutually exclusive directions to be equivalent to no obligation, as if the obligations cancel each other, provides greater incentive to create such dilemmas for it enables one to avoid moral responsibility.[15] In trade-off situations (i.e. situations of mutually exclusive actions) where we are obligated B to aid both the larger and the smaller groups facing a similar tragedy, just as in trade-off situations where there is no obligation, obligation cannot morally determine our actions. If we are morally obligated B to do both, then moral obligation does not decide the issue.

Someone might object that the obligations B may be of different strengths so that the larger group is favoured. I have been attempting to defend the view that the numbers do not count for a broader range of obligations than is generally allowed by libertarians. Even so, I cannot defend so broad a range of obligations as would include obligations that beg the question against the position. I need not defend the obligation A to aid the larger group in trade-off situations, nor orderings of obligations B such that moral obligations to aid the larger group in trade-off situations are stronger than the moral obligations to aid the smaller group. I will simply require that anyone wishing to use such obligations and orderings of obligations as an objection to the view (that the numbers do not count in matters of moral obligation) provide independent argument for the acceptance of such orderings or obligations. Furthermore, I might reasonably place restrictions on such independent arguments. First, rationality may provide for obligations but in such

cases obligations of reason decide the issue rather than obligations of morality. Second, a restatement of a distinction we have already been using, morality may provide some grounds for choosing to aid the larger group over aiding the smaller group, but further argument would be needed to show that such grounds constitute moral obligation.[16] Thus, an independent argument by way of analogy to rational prudence would not be acceptable, nor would analogies to, or general appeals to, non-obligatory morality (for example, our moral intuitions) be acceptable.

I believe that these remarks provide enough force to enable us to draw a rather weak conclusion. We conclude that to date the view that in matters of moral obligation the numbers should not count is a defensible component of a view of moral significance (even if not all of Taurek's arguments and presuppositions are defensible). This weak conclusion is all that is required for us to conclude that Singer does not establish the obligation to assist the hungry for all who hold plausible ethical views, since some with plausible ethical views might give their aid to other worthy causes even though the numbers of people helped through these other worthy causes are less. Some essential elements from his version of utilitarianism are required in order for Singer to establish the obligation to prevent some absolute poverty rather than preventing or working towards the prevention of comparable forms of human suffering (e.g. cancer). In particular, one must accept his view that the moral significance of human interests is always additive when calculating the applicable obligations to aid.

Furthermore, if Singer believes himself to be establishing an obligation A to aid in the prevention of absolute poverty, then this "essential element" of his utilitarianism has the implausible result of obligating us to not support other worthy causes involving lesser numbers of potential recipients of aid, and this result will be counter to the moral intuitions of many, since the condemnation of a moral obligation A against giving to cancer research in times like ours is too strong. On the other hand, if Singer believes himself to be establishing an obligation B to aid in the prevention of some absolute poverty, then two direc-

tions are again possible. Either he believes that this obligation B is such that it always overrides other obligations B to smaller groups facing comparable suffering, in which case the result is almost as implausible as the obligation A interpretation of Singer, since one would always have less moral reason to give to cancer research and would always face considerably greater blame than if one had supported the prevention of absolute poverty instead. Or, the obligation B to give aid towards preventing absolute poverty may be sometimes praiseworthily overridden by obligations B towards smaller groups facing similar suffering, in which case Singer has established much less obligation than he appears to believe himself to have established for the prevention of some absolute poverty. Either Singer allows us the moral freedom to support other worthy causes regardless of the number of individuals involved, or he does not. If he does he has accomplished less than he claims, if he does not then his morality seems to be too harsh for the average moral agent, being suited rather for moral heroes or moral saints. His basic argument will either lose its breadth of appeal or its strength. To this extent Singer has failed to demonstrate a general moral obligation to prevent some absolute poverty. (Such a conclusion does not imply that there might not remain a general obligation to help prevent some bad or other.) The question arises at this point: Have we, by criticizing Singer in this way, again granted more plausibility to Hardin's views? To answer this question we must consider Hardin's views relative to the issue of whether the numbers of individuals involved in some suffering or benefit should be given moral weight.

C. Hardin and the Numbers Question

This discussion, the final part of this work, will be brief. We now address a question which is admittedly anticlimactic to the purpose of the present section, which has already been accomplished. Nevertheless, having provided a criticism of Singer, it is important to the debate between Hardin and Singer, which we have here been developing, that

we note that our criticism of Singer's position does not provide a renewed defense for Hardin's views. We are further motivated to include this discussion by the desire for completeness: Having seen Singer's relation to the issue of whether the numbers of individuals involved are an overriding consideration for decisions based on moral values, we might well wonder what Hardin's stance toward so important an issue might be.

In the earlier part of this work where we defended Hardin we sometimes allowed as a defense objections which were in essence criticisms of Singer's position. We did not include at that point the criticism of Singer which we have developed in this section. Hardin would not develop such a criticism of Singer's position because Hardin agrees wholeheartedly with Singer's tendency towards having the numbers count always in the trade-off situations where one interest group is larger than the other.[17] Hardin's commitment to triage policy obliges him to support the position that when one is able to save either, but not both, of two unequally sized groups from similar suffering or death, one is morally obligated to save the larger group. Triage policy is the policy of selecting from the individuals requiring aid so as to use resources most efficiently. Hardin does not seem to consider that as a result of this policy he might not be able to follow the Cardinal Rule of Policy which claims that we ought never to develop policies which ask people to act against their own interests. In trade-off situations our own interest could often be to save a smaller group, for example one's family or friends rather than a larger group, say the general endangered public. More importantly in the world hunger situation we could use resources much more efficiently towards the saving of lives by giving up expensive medical research which might be construed as in our interest since the results of such research is usually available to the affluent, our families and our friends, long before the results benefit those in absolute poverty. Less expensive medical results are not now applied to the full extent possible (e.g. not in absolute poverty areas where we know that our medical knowledge concerning nutrition could be put to greater use).

One might expect that a policy of triage, if it has priority over

the Cardinal Rule of Policy, would obligate the affluent to send all their provisions to the absolute poverty countries since such an action would be most efficient at saving lives; the affluent, being fewer and making greater demands upon the limited resources, would, by selflessly giving up their provisions, save much more life even if they themselves died off as a result than if the poor continue to starve and the affluent continue to live in luxury.

Hardin can argue in two ways against the use of the policy of triage to establish such conclusions. He might argue that the Cardinal Rule of Policy takes precedence even over triage policy in cases of conflict. But Hardin knows well that it is to the self-interest of many affluent to encourage sending aid to poverty-stricken places simply because of the effects such giving has on our economies. In such cases Hardin would like to use the concept of triage to limit the aid sent. Furthermore, if we simply followed self-interest except in those cases where it did not conflict with triage policy, then triage policy will be mostly superfluous. Hardin is not so brazen as to simply advocate that we aid those groups we find it in our self-interest to aid; he wants to at least maintain the appearance of offering a morality. What, then, is his second argument against the use of the concept of triage which claims that we might more efficiently save the lives of those within absolute poverty than those within the affluent groups? And how does he use triage policy to limit aid?

Hardin argues that the lives we wish to save and the suffering we seek to prevent are cumulative over time. He believes that if we balance the future loss of life that a population crash would bring against the loss of life involved in the present world hunger situation we would see that not aiding is <u>in the long run</u> the more efficient means to saving life. But if this is Hardin's position he is immediately faced with a large factual question.

There is a large factual question concerning which course of action will really keep the amount of suffering and death to a minimum. Hardin seems to think that his predictions show that his advice will save

the greater number in the long run. Even so, he is not clear whether he is really considering the cumulative number of interests met by the various programmes. That is to say, he may be comparing the number of people who would die now over the next few years to the numbers that would die in a population crash. This is not a fair comparison. A fair comparison concerned for the long-term results must consider the continued loss of human life which would occur on following Hardin's advice relative to a one-time large population crash which could result from Singer's advice. Continued loss of human life would occur in following Hardin's advice since famine and malnutrition would be considered acceptable controls for human population growth, for an indeterminate period of time into the future. If Hardin's predictions are correct, carrying capacities would not be exceeded by so much as they are now and thus the amount of suffering at any one time in the future would likely be less than it is now. But if Hardin's predictions are correct this form of suffering would be perpetuated for ages. The population crash which could result from Singer's advice represents a relatively shorter period of time, and after the crash one would expect the resources to be sufficient to the few survivors, so that there could be ages to pass before people again suffer from overpopulation. Admittedly, after a population crash there presumably would be other various forms of suffering and causes of death, but with there being fewer people this suffering will be less than if it occurred among our present population levels. The point is that cumulatively, over the ages, the suffering resultant from following Hardin's advice could reach staggering proportions, even greater than a one time large population crash. Hardin does not consider this possibility.

Thus, Hardin must solve a rather large factual question if he is to maintain that his advice is of more value than pro-aid advice, from that universal point of view (the view of an impartial observer) which claims the "numbers" should always be decisive. On the other hand, if Hardin would admit that the numbers of individuals might not count, then it would no longer be clear that triage policy should be given as important a role as Hardin gives it, and in that case Hardin's appeal appears

to lose some support from a source of moral value (utility) which it primarily relied on for support. Moreover that Hardin could turn to perfectionist values for support is also not fully obvious. For if the numbers always count then perfectionist values will be limited as we noted in criticizing Singer. Nor is it obvious which society would make greater achievements: One recovering from a population crash or one bearing the continual repetition of suffering by absolute poverty (recall our critique of Hardin). Thus even if Hardin would allow that the number of individuals involved might not always be given decisive moral weight, the support of his advice by perfectionist ends is not fully obvious. At the very least Hardin will need to provide a fuller account of the relationships between triage policy, the Cardinal Rule of Policy and the factual problem of where the greater number of interests will lie.

One might expect Hardin to object that he has in fact provided a fuller account then our representation of it in this part of the discussion. He might argue that his use of the concept of triage attempts not merely to minimize suffering and death but also attempts to maximize the survival of germ lines in this situation of limited resources. That is, even if the harm prevented by his advice is no greater than the harm prevented by Singer's, at least his advice offers some consolating benefits: more of the people presently living can take comfort in knowing that they may have descendents as far into the future as possible.

Even so, Hardin cannot guarantee which germ lines his advice will help to survive. Most likely the germ lines of the present affluent will have an advantage for several generations. This is all he can claim. Furthermore, not everyone makes the project of having descendents as far into the future as possible their own project. Not everyone places so high a value on leaving a germ line as Hardin seems to think. Lastly, recall the point made in our critique of Hardin that some of one's descendents might consider one blameworthy for having brought them into a world which is unstable, filled with moral evils and lacking in human compassion. (This is not to suggest that the descendents would be <u>happier</u> if they were not existent.) Thus the <u>moral</u> value of leaving a germ

line at any cost is questionable.

In sum Hardin considers his position to be committed to the view that the numbers of individuals involved should always be given some weight in moral decisions. Thus, he is not able to criticize Singer on this point in the way we have done so. Moreover, Hardin faces large factual questions as to whether his advice will actually minimize suffering and death in the long run, since a very long future with small amounts of suffering and death occurring continuously might well accumulate more suffering and death than a future facing the threat of a large but--so far as we are able to accept responsibility for--one time population crash. I take this point to be very significant since the strongest intuitive appeal of Hardin's position was that it appeared to offer less suffering in the long run--it is no longer clear that it does offer less suffering because the "long run" can get very long.

FOOTNOTES FOR SECTION THREE

1. See J. Arthur, "Rights and the Duty to Bring Aid", in World Hunger and Moral Obligation, ed. W. Aiken and H. La Follette (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1977), pp.37-48, for an example of someone who does not accept Singer's principle.

2. See "Breathing Other People's Smoke", in British Medical Journal, vol.2, No.6135 (August 12th, 1978), pp.453-454. Also relevant is R. Wilson, "Risks Caused by Low Levels of Pollution", in The Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine, vol.51, No.1 (January-February, 1978), pp.37-51. Some research has also been published disputing these results. See also John King-Farlow, Self-Knowledge and Social Relations: Groundwork of Universal Community (New York: Science History Publications, 1978), p.275, where it is noted that the harm may be real but relatively small compared to other forms of pollution.

3. Other ways of fulfilling this obligation may also be easily provided for. Better ventilation of public areas would be an example. (Gas masks might be easy to provide in some situations.)

4. See J. Arthur, "Rights and the Duty to Bring Aid", pp.41-44. Arthur criticizes a weaker version of Singer's principle for its use of "moral significance" undefined, but he assumes for the sake of argument that one cannot argue against the principle we are considering in the same way. (He has other grounds on which to reject it.)

5. P. Singer, Practical Ethics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp.170-171. Singer does not use the term "degrees" but he does speak of "how much" one gives depending on how many things are considered to be of comparable significance, and quantities admit of degrees.

6. P. Singer, Practical Ethics, p.172.

7. Arthur, however, assumes that the sacrifice of cultural and artistic values are not considered of comparable significance see note 4.

8. P. Singer, Practical Ethics, p.19.

9. P. Singer, Practical Ethics, p.171.

10. This second sense seems to be in agreement with Gregory S. Kavka's proposal in "The Numbers Should Count", in Philosophical Studies, vol.36, no.3 (October, 1979), pp.285-293, especially p.293.

11. In any case, there are better arguments for the same result (i.e. the equal chance for everyone), rather than fabricating equivalences: see John Taurek, "Should the Numbers Count?", in Philosophy and Public Affairs vol.6, no.4 (Summer, 1977), pp.293-316. Taurek argues from a different source of moral value than we are considering at this point.

12. G. Hardin, Promethean Ethics (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980), pp.48-51. Hardin believes that the Arabs are already strongly motivated to overpopulation for similar reasons as we are considering.

13. J. Taurek, "Should the Numbers Count?", in Philosophy and Public Affairs vol.6, no.4 (Summer, 1977), pp.293-316.

14. First by Derek Parfit, in "Innumerate Ethics", in Philosophy and Public Affairs, vol.7, no.4 (Summer, 1978), and also be Gregory S. Kavka's "The Numbers Should Count", in Philosophical Studies, vol.36, no.3 (October, 1979).

15. See Ruth Barcan Marcus, "Moral Dilemmas and Consistency", in The Journal of Philosophy, LXXVII, No.3 (March, 1980), pp.121-136.

16. See the account of praiseworthiness and blameworthiness given in the Introduction p.11 above.

17. G. Hardin, Promethean Ethics, pp.67-70.

CONCLUSION

In this short conclusion I hope to sum up the accomplishments of our continuation of the Hardin/Singer debate on world hunger, and to give some indication of what might be valuable questions to pursue in developing the debate beyond the accomplishments of this study.

In the Introduction I introduced the major claim of this work and developed the meaning of this claim: Neither Hardin nor Singer have established that there is a general obligation for the affluent to follow their respective advice. The Introduction also developed some of the conceptual apparatus used throughout the study. Most important are the distinctions I make between obligations A and obligations B, and between the obligations of morality and the obligations of reason (or practical reason). Obligations A are those obligations which are such that there are no obligations to do both of two mutually exclusive acts. Obligations B, on the other hand, might obligate one to do both of two mutually exclusive acts. These distinctions are used throughout in our criticisms of Hardin and Singer: Neither of them establish any moral obligations A to follow their advice nor any overriding moral obligations B. A further important concept introduced in the Introduction is the conception of moral value as having a number of distinct sources. For the purposes of this study I have simply accepted the defense of this conception given by Thomas Nagel and furthermore the five sources used by Nagel are briefly explained in the Introduction and used throughout this project in analysing various claims to moral value.

In the first section we consider four possible moral positions which might be adopted towards world hunger by the affluent. We interpreted Singer's position to be that the affluent are obligated to aid the hungry, making it blameworthy not to. Hardin's position was taken

to be that the obligation is to not aid the starving, making it blameworthy to send aid. The other possible positions towards world hunger do not assign blame to the actions of the affluent but only either praise aid or praise non-aid. This section also includes reviews of both Hardin's arguments and Singer's to familiarize the reader to the present state of the debate.

In the second section, the discussion begins with consideration of Singer's criticism of Hardin's position. In particular we note how Singer's basic argument allows for triage, although perhaps a more reasonable triage than Hardin's. We then consider some possible answers Hardin might give to the criticisms which have been directed at his work, showing to some extent that some criticisms of Hardin have underestimated the complexity of Hardin's view. We end this section with a lengthy critique of Hardin's position, questioning the accuracy of his predictions concerning the probabilities of benefits or harms by investigating the usefulness of the principles, policies and factors on which he bases these predictions. We also investigate more closely the sources of moral value available to his advice and find that even if his plans were to succeed, the moral value of the results may be less than he seems to think. Now since the likelihood of moral value resulting from Hardin's advice is so very questionable--both the likelihood and the value having been shown to be limited--the possibility of a moral obligation A or overriding moral obligations B to follow his advice becomes remote, given that Hardin is a consequentialist and non-consequentialists do not generally approve of his advice, especially in the presence of advice with greater likelihood of moral value. The advice more likely to produce greater moral value which is considered is that which advises the use of responsible experimentation with various forms of aid, possibly in conjunction with an order to compassion such that <u>some</u> preference for those nearest oneself might be allowable. Alternatively one might say that the only moral obligation Hardin establishes is very limited obligation B.

The third section attempts both to develop a critique of Singer

showing how he fails to establish a general moral obligation to follow his advice and to indicate the problems faced by Singer and Hardin in relation to the question of whether the numbers of people should count in calculating one's obligations. The section begins with a further study of Singer's basic argument and we note that his basic principle while broadly acceptable is not defined. Thus the possibility arises for the claim to be made that the attempted reduction of any amount, however small, of comparable suffering and death relieves one from the obligation to help prevent some absolute poverty. If Singer wants to rule out this possibility he needs to argue that the numbers of individuals involved in some suffering always "counts" in the determination of obligations towards that suffering in trade-off situations. We are in fact considering a trade-off situation since the resources--that portion of the family income available to support worthwhile causes--are limited relative to the available worthy causes. If Singer hopes to argue that the numbers should always count in determining obligations he will lose the breadth of his principle's appeal. More importantly, some defensible moral views will not accept his principle which narrows the generality of the obligation he had hoped to establish. Furthermore we notice that if Singer maintains that the numbers always count in the determination of obligations, then either he means obligations A, overriding obligations B or limited obligations B. But if he has obligations A or overriding obligations B in mind then his view seems implausible in virtue of its ruling out the moral value of some great achievements in medicine (relating to the rarer diseases) and in virtue of its providing a greater motivation for groups to grow. But to have established only limited obligations B and only for those accepting that moral view agreeing with his concerning the moral value of the numbers of people involved is much less then Singer thinks he has achieved. (Even if we could establish that he has provided for <u>prima facie</u> obligations A, it will be easier to avoid their claim on one's moral actions than Singer seems to think.)

This third section concludes with a discussion of Hardin's relation to the question of whether the "numbers" should count. Hardin agrees

with Singer on this point and so does not criticize Singer in the manner in which we have. But Hardin is shown to face a large factual question as to which advice will really lead to the greatest cumulative amounts of suffering, which again casts doubt on the value of Hardin's advice.

Now in the light of this discussion, the question arises as to what would be a rational and moral course of action for the affluent to take in the world hunger situation. Further argumentation and further study would be required to establish the suggestion I am about to make, and I make the suggestion because I believe that the world hunger debate might fruitfully be extended to consider such a suggestion.

The advice to the affluent which should be found consistent with our study is that a certain amount of moral freedom be allowed to the affluent in the world hunger situation. Our obligations B account would claim that the blame one faces is not significantly different if one chooses to aid or not to aid. Even so, we have not ruled out the possibility of one alternative being significantly more praiseworthy. Furthermore, our obligations B account will hold us morally responsible for whatever course of action we, the affluent, take. I have already suggested that a programme of broad experimentation with forms of aid, undertake responsibly, and perhaps allowing for preference to aid those closest first, would be morally and rationally praiseworthy. I suspect that an approach which allows smaller groups some consideration such that they might sometimes receive aid rather than a larger group might be desirable. But the recent giving spree undertaken by Canadians towards cancer research seems somewhat excessive relative to the size of the group to be benefitted (not to mention the slim chances for success) and the vast needs which could be more efficiently met in absolute poverty societies. It seems eminently reasonable to me that in our moral freedom to provide various types of aid to various types and sizes of groups we should use deliberation and discernment in our acts of compassion. This is not to say that we should calculate and proportion our giving exactly, relative to the group sizes and the probabilities of success of the multitudinous worthy causes competing for our attention

(for that would result in a huge waste of time at the adding machine and excessive service charges from the banks). By suggesting that some courses of action are praiseworthy or desirable in the world hunger situation I do not thereby indicate the dissolution of the moral dilemma with which the situation confronts us. If a population crash should occur as a result of the programme of moral freedom tempered by considered experimentation here offered, then I and those that agree with me will bear the blame. The moral dilemma will be resolved when the danger of a huge population crash is eliminated. These are issues deserving of future consideration as the debate on world hunger continues.

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